SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 431. FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 3RD, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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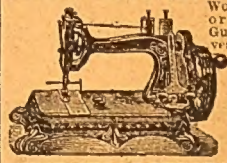

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FORTUNE STONE

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 431.] For the week ending April 3rd, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

GIVE ME WEALTH.

THERE was a strong personality about Eric Mansfield that raised him far above his fellow clerks at Bard's Bank. On the best of terms with one and all, yet none could say they knew him well. Some indefinable characteristic in his nature acted as a barrier to anything approaching friendship, and, apa t from the daily association his fellow clerks had with him in the routine of their avocations, Mansfield was a stranger to them.

Different from most young men, Mansfield seemed totally unaware of the existence of personal pronouns, and as reserved men always seem to be keeping something back, endless efforts were made off and on by the employés at Bard's to learn something of this enigma; but they were as ignorant at the end of twelve months as on the first day Mansfield joined the firm.

The various heads of the firm considered him a model clerk. He was as punctual as the sun, and accurate and precise in everything he did, and at the time of the opening of this story had just been appointed confidential clerk to the junior partner, Mr. Arthur Bard.

It was an old custom at Bard's that when one of the rank and file received sudden promotion to any important or confidential position, to celebrate it in the form of a supper, for which the recipient of the new post had the privilege of paying. On this occasion, however, and it was openly mooted as being the only one on record, there was no conviviality.

Mansfield explained that he knew what the custom was, and what he was expected to do, but pleaded indisposition—he called it liver. He hoped nevertheless that his enforced absence would not in any way interfere with the ancient precepts being upheld, and he would be more than pleased if they would allow him the privilege of suggesting that the Holborn——

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His little speech was not permitted to go beyond that point, for one of the features of the supper was the ceremonials attached to it, which naturally necessitated the presence of the principal. So the supper was indefinitely postponed.

The possession of an affected liver is an affliction that only those who have realised the ownership of that special piece of the internal anatomy can truly understand and sympathise with, yet Mansfield, despite his, managed to demolish a good many epicurean dishes at his club that same evening, and as we find him now—is calmly smoking a cigar with two aristocratic-looking young men, while taking sips of liqueur and coffee.

"What are you going to do with yourself to-night, Mansfield?" asks the elder of the two strangers.

"Oh, I think I shall turn in—I feel as if everything jars to-night."

"Come and have a turn in the card-room," suggests the other.

"I never play cards," Mansfield quietly replies.

"What's the difference between cards and backing a horse, old chap? Come, that's straining at the gnat a little, isn't it?"

"There's a vast difference. You back a horse by speaking three words, or by a mere nod—but cards, pshaw! breathing bad air, smoking, drinking, and losing a night's rest!"

"If Mansfield did that, what on earth would become of Bard's bank, I wonder?"

"Oh, I suppose I should be compelled to resign, and no doubt my successor would be chosen from that class who have no brains to fuddle."

"Thanks, Mansfield."

"Well, you asked for it, Philip."

"If Mansfield is really going, I'll give you one in five for fifty, Phil."

"Not good enough; I'll take two hundred."

"Split it?"

"Any way you like."

"I wonder," thought Mansfield, as he slowly strode along Pall Mall, "what those two men would do if they knew I was on the brink of—of what—say ruin. This is almost Thursday. By Monday I must raise two thousand seven hundred. If I owed it to a man I don't

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think I would have any compunction in being dubbed a defaulter, but I cannot, no I cannot let Alice in, she has sacrificed a lot for me, and I've been blackguard enough in that quarter. No, I see but one course open. It will provide the evening papers with a good bill: Absconding bank clerk—enormous defalcations—yes, and as soon as Alice saw it she would return the two-seven to Bard's. I'll go and see her now.

"Is Miss Cartwright in, and alone?" Mansfield asked the question from the boy in charge of the lift at Bedford Mansions.

"I think so, sir, but I've been away for my supper. Goin' up, sir?"

"Yes."

Arrived on the fourth floor, he quickly crossed the balcony, and touched the electric bell on the door whereon "Miss Cartwright" was printed.

"Is Miss Cartwright in?"

"Yes, sir."

"Alone?"

"She is, sir."

"That will do, I know the way."

In a room furnished with exquisite taste—if slightly foreign in appearance, sat Alice Cartwright, reading. When she heard the well-known footsteps of Mansfield she rose and ran to meet him.

"Oh, Eric, my love, this is kind of you. Have you come for supper? Are you in a hurry, because I will order it at once if you are?"

"No, dear, I'm neither in a hurry nor hungry. I've come just to have a talk—if you'll have me."

"Ah, but have you come to talk to me nicely, or to hedge that bet on Will-o'-the-Wisp?"

"Who told you I had a bet on Will-o'-the-Wisp?"

"Sir Philip Marshall himself. He came this morning and asked me what the price was. I told him ——"

"A hundred to six."

"Yes, and then he offered to buy part of the book."

"The fool."

"I don't think he is a fool at all. He certainly allows that man Edgcombe to sponge dreadfully, but apart from that I don't think Sir Philip is at all foolish. But we are talking shop. Come and sit here by me, and put your arms round me, and love me as you used to do."

"No, dear, I would bore you, I——"

"You bore me, Eric, you know you couldn't."

"It is sweet of you to say so, dear, but what I want is sleep. Let me lie down here for an hour, will you?"

"Will I? You stupid boy. Now wait a minute, don't be so impatient. Lift your head—no, this way. Isn't that better?"

"Yes, darling."

"Are you warm enough, or shall I put this rug round you?"

"Put it over my feet. Ah, that's splendid. Call me when it's time for me to go."

"Is that all?"

"All! What do you mean?"

"Don't you want a kiss?"

This was the lady bookmaker over whom all London was agog. No paper with a society column but had some personal item concerning Miss Alice Cartwright—the usual paragraphs: How she preferred her soup cold, and never was known to tie her boot-laces in a double knot. Rumour, and the ever-moving current report, gave the most brilliant details of her career, all of which were wonderful pieces of news to the lady herself.

One particular item of *truth*, however, if put up for auction in Fleet Street, would have obtained a fabulous price, but that was a secret between Alice and Mansfield.

And she sat in the subdued light watching the sleeping form of the man she loved, not a movement of his escaped her. If in restless turnings he moved the cushion from beneath his head, she would promptly and gently replace it. She was perfectly happy, and he?

The tender pressure of her lips—their very warmth, was still upon his when his brain became troubled with dreams. At first they were mere reflections of his active thoughts, the passing in a clouded phantasm of daily scenes and troubles. A period of deep sleep followed. Then he became conscious that he was dreaming again, but the dream took the form more of a vision. Someone was speaking to him, he knew not whom, nor could he tell what was said at first. Gradually, however, the buzzing in his ears took more definite sound, and he saw a figure kneeling beside him—and understood.

In his imagination he said to the figure at his side:

"Have you come to warn me?"

"No, to offer you your choice. Which will you have?—and your wish shall be granted. Honour, health, fame, happiness, or wealth?"

"Give me wealth—give me wealth."

"Eric, Eric, wake up."

"Give me, give me, oh——"

"What, dear, some water?"

"I was dreaming, Alice."

"You are ill, darling. Do let me get you something—a little brandy?"

"No, I will go home. I'm all right except a touch of liver; it will be well in the morning."

And he went.

Settling day arrived, and Mansfield had failed to raise the necessary money. On the way to the office he pondered deeply over his affairs. His objection to robbing Bard's bank was not from any sense of honour—for he was absolutely unscrupulous—but it would end all his scheming and ambition.

"I will see Alice and put her off for a week, and do a plunge. It is my only chance," he muttered as he entered the bank.

Fate, however, in the shape of a fortune, rescued him from himself. Some old idiot—his thankful way of putting it—had left him seven or eight thousand a year. The old idiot in question was his father, who had died without leaving a will—at least none was found, fortunately for Eric Mansfield, for he had long left the family circle with the proverbial shilling.

As soon as all the necessary legal arrangements were settled Mansfield went away; "to let the thing blow over a bit" was his motive.

Much talk ensued at the club over Mansfield's good luck, but the general surprise was nobody knew Mansfield possessed a father. Major Bousfield and Sir Philip Marshall were discussing Mansfield and his affairs one morning, and Sir Philip staggered the Major by remarking:

"I suppose he will marry Alice Cartwright, now?"

"By Heavens, I hope not!"

"Ah, Major, have you a tender spot for that quarter?"

"Not I, my boy. I was meaning that Alice Cartwright is far too good for him."

"You haven't a very exalted opinion of Mansfield, seemingly?"

"I should think not; he is a cold-blooded cur."

"I say, that's strong for you, Major."

"Yes, but I mean it."

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"Well, I think Mansfield is strangely selfish, but I am certain Alice Cartwright loves him—dotes on him."

"Ay, and he?"

"Who could fathom that statue?"

For six months nothing was heard of Mansfield. He seemed to have dropped completely out of existence. Sir Philip Marshall was ruminating over the fact one Saturday morning. Sir Philip was an ardent footballer, and every Saturday during the winter assiduously scanned the lists of the teams in *The Sportsman*, and seeing the name of Mansfield, of course it recalled memories of Eric.

"Hullo, Phil!" the new-comer was Major Bousfield. "Have you seen this?" handing over a paper.

"The vile sneak!" remarked Sir Philip after reading. "It's odd, I was just thinking of him. But how on earth has this come about?"

"Simple as possible. The Earl of Blessington and family are at Cannes for the winter. Mansfield has evidently found the climate there equally charming."

"It will kill Alice Cartwright."

"Not it; she will be well out of it."

"I'll go and see her."

"Don't, Phil! She'll never like you again if you tell her. Your presence will always recall the misery—take my tip!"

"No; I'm off at once."

Ten minutes sufficed to reach Bedford Mansions.

"You are an early visitor, Sir Philip."

"Yes. I say, Miss Cartwright, I wish you would drop the handle, I hate it."

"But I cannot call you Mr. Marshall."

"Why not call me Phil, like the others? and you and and I are such old friends! I mean to call you Alice—Miss Cartwright is such a lot to get out, isn't it?"

"Yes—Phil."

"Now, Alice, I want you to think as well of me as you can, because I'm going to run the risk of—of making you hate and despise me."

"Whatever is coming? Are you broke, Phil?"

That was the maximum of calamities that Alice thought could be wrong with Sir Philip Marshall.

"No. I'm not going to speak about myself at all. And, first of all, I'm going to ask you a question, and don't think it is out of mere curiosity, or impertinent."

"You are beginning to frighten me, Sir Philip."

"Sir!"

"I mean Phil."

"Do you love Eric Mansfield? Oh, Alice, forgive me; I was brutal to ask so bluntly."

"Tell me all—quick, quick, is he dead?"

"No."

"He is ill, dying in some foreign land, and I here. Oh, tell me where he is?"

"He is neither ill nor dying, but, Alice, he is dead to you."

"To me?"

"Don't you understand, he is a cur, and has——"

"No, no, you don't know. What has he done? I forgive him, whatever it is—even if it is murder."

"He's married."

"Married!" with a gasp.

"Yes, he's married Lady Isobel, second daughter of the Earl of Blessington."

"Leave me, Phil."

"No, I won't yet."

"I want to be alone—to think."

"Let me manage a bit for you. How is your book?"

"Full. I shall never take another bet. This is the hand of Providence; I should never have taken up such an unwomanly occupation."

"Nonsense! I'll take your book over, if you'll let me."

"No, Phil; I mean what I said, so do go."

"And you won't hate me for bringing this bad news, but remember you have escaped marrying a blackguard."

"I shall never hate you, whatever you do; you have been very kind to me this morning. I would rather have heard it from you than anyone. Now go."

"Now, then, Phil, you fool, pull yourself together, else you'll be in fine trim this afternoon," and, with this admonition to himself, he walked off as straight as a British soldier—which he was.

* * * * *

"I am going with father and the girls to Daly's to-night. Will you drop in?"

"Let me see, what's on there?"

"The *Geisha*."

"I may if I get back in time, but in all probability I will have to run down to Newmarket."

"Whatever for, Eric?"

"Well, you see, Isobel, every man in my position is supposed to do something these days, so I mean to keep a few horses."

"But we have enough, surely?"

"I mean racehorses, my dear."

"Oh, Eric, cannot you find anything else than that?"

"I knew, of course, that you would object to any scheme I suggested, particularly if it would give me pleasure."

"I hate betting and horse-racing."

"Don't be foolish, Isobel. It is the duty of those who can afford it to try and improve the breed of racers in England and to purify the turf generally."

"I am sure your motives are purely philanthropical, dear, but I dislike the idea all the same."

"Of course you do! You dislike anything I do, and will soon dislike me also, I suppose."

"Is that kind, Eric?"

"Well, you goad me to saying nasty things. You seem perpetually trying to thwart me."

"Do I, Eric? Well, I won't even comment on your doings for the future, except that I do wish you would see someone about your cough."

"Oh, hang the cough! I beg your pardon, Isobel; come back—I am very sorry. Isobel!"

She had gone.

"I wonder what on earth is the matter with me. I used to have myself under better control. Isobel is very irritating sometimes; she either can't, or won't, see how her constant worrying annoys me, but I was a fool to swear. Yes, I'll go and see her."

Without speaking or knocking he made an attempt to open the door of his wife's boudoir, but found it locked.

"Let me in, Isobel," he asked pleadingly.

No answer.

"Isobel! do you hear?"

"Yes, I hear, but I am busy, and prefer my own company just at present."

Mansfield's lips twinged slightly; it was a unique experience for him to be baulked in anything.

"Open this door at once, or I will smash it in."

"Please yourself, of course."

For the moment his temper got the better of him, and he burst open the lock and entered the room.

"You had better continue the dictates of your breeding, and beat me now."

"Look here, madam"—grasping her by the wrist—"I want you to fully understand that I am master of this

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house, and will be obeyed. Don't think you've got one of your blue-blooded puppets to deal with now."

"At least, the blue-blooded puppets don't bully and swear at their wives. Eric, you are hurting my wrist. Eric, oh! you brute." With an effort she managed to escape from him.

"My Lady Isobel requires taming, and objects to the process."

"You will not have the opportunity of repeating your cruelty."

"Ah, you purpose showing only the velvet paw—a wise discretion on your part—very wise."

"Don't flatter yourself. I mean to leave you to-day."

"Oh, surely not. Will it be for good?"

"Do you think I am going to live with a man little better than a wife-beater?"

"I didn't know you had any private income."

"I shall go home again."

"I don't somehow think you will."

"Do you imagine that your threats will prevent me?"

"Well, my dear, your father is indebted to me for a few thousands, and has been for some considerable time. If he allows you to remain in his house against your husband's wishes I will—ah—request an immediate settlement—and I know he hasn't got it, and matters might become strained. Think the matter over, my lady, but don't do anything rash."

When Mansfield returned in the afternoon he was surprised to find that his wife had gone to Cadogan Place, and at once jumped to the conclusion that she had left him for good; whereas Lady Isobel had merely gone to see her father to verify Mansfield's statement regarding the loan, and to ask his advice.

All the pent-up venom and passion in Mansfield's nature appeared to suddenly spring into life, and instead of the calm, sneering, calculating man of the world, he was changed to a fiend incarnate. His features were distorted to ghastliness, and the violent fits of coughing that now and again attacked him with terrible violence only added to his devilish appearance. Martin, the butler, when summoned, stared horror-stricken at his master.

"Martin, have my things packed for a year's foreign tour, and send them to Charing Cross station."

"To-day, sir?"

"Yes, at once, and I want you to pay all the servants off and shut up the house as quickly as you can. If Lady Isobel returns she is not to enter this house on any pretext, do you understand?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"Have her clothes and things sent to Cadogan Place."

"I believe this is her ladyship coming in now, sir."

"Yes, go and obey the other orders."

"You have changed your mind too late, my lady, you can return to your father's house, no one wants you here."

"Eric! whatever do you mean?"

"Neither more nor less than what I said. In an hour's time this house will be shut up, so if you want any of your effects you had better see after them."

"Eric, dear, you are not well. Oh, surely you don't mean this just because of the few words we had this morning. Eric, speak to me!"

"It's too late, I tell you, my mind is made up."

"Oh, Eric, darling, forgive me, I didn't mean to vex you like this."

"Get out of my way. I am going."

"No, no. I cannot let you go like this. Eric, my love, my husband, forgive me."

She stood facing him with her arms pleadingly extended, and as he made a stride forward, she flung herself against him, crying and imploring him not to leave her. He tried to disengage himself from the nervous arms that were round him, but they held him with the strength of despair. Losing every atom of control of himself he threw her violently from him, and Lady Isobel fell with a crash against the marble fire-guard, her head striking the outer rail with a horrible thud—she was dead.

Mansfield left the house a different man—he hadn't the remotest idea that he had killed his wife. The evil passions deserted him as quickly as they had risen, and he felt almost inclined to go back and make it up with Isobel; and possibly might have returned on that errand, but for one reason. He didn't love her, and never had done since his marriage, which, in fact, was only a means to attain an end.

Earl Blessington had influence in political inner circles, and being pressed for money had consented to use his efforts on behalf of Mansfield for a consideration—the consideration being a loan and the marriage of one of his daughters. Unfortunately for all concerned, the unexpected resignation of Lord Rosebery had upset all calculations, and Mansfield's ambitions being shattered, his health failing, and being tied to a woman between whom and himself there wasn't a taste in common, his selfish nature became soured and bitter.

"It is always well," Mansfield mused as he walked towards Bedford Mansions, "to keep one good card in reserve, if only to gain the lead. Yes, I will play mine now, and when it scores, as it is sure to, I will return that doddering old imbecile his daughter and his I O U, having no further use for either, and Alice and I will leave this forsaken climate and go somewhere where there is warmth and sunshine."

"Miss Cartwright said she would be back by six, did she? Ah, then, I will wait, it is nearly that now."

A bright red fire gave not only actual heat to the room, but reflected a warm glow on the surroundings, and as Mansfield sat watching the ever-changing pictures in the grate, his thoughts, gradually released from their continued strain, ran riot for a while, but the warmth and soothing influences soon impelled reflections of that last visit, and everything that occurred, even to his dream, was vividly depicted in his mind. The reverie was interrupted by the sound of voices and footsteps approaching, and Mansfield turned to see who it was just as Alice and Sir Philip Marshall entered the room.

"How do you, Alice? How are you, Phil?"

"What's the matter? Can't you speak?" as Alice and Sir Philip drew back.

"Yes, Mansfield, kindly drop Christian names for the future. In fact, I think we had better drop acquaintanceship altogether. My wife and I don't——"

"Your what?" meaningly.

"My wife, sir," taking Alice's hand.

Mansfield sank into a chair; he tried to articulate something, but the red stream of life choked all utterance, save a sickening gurgle; he had burst an artery.

When Sir Philip returned to Bedford Mansions, after taking his wife to a neighbouring hotel, two men accosted him.

"Excuse me, Sir Philip," said one. "Is Mr. Eric Mansfield upstairs?"

"He was; why do you ask?"

"We're two police officers, and we have warrants for his arrest for forgery and murder. Do you know where he is, sir?"

"Heaven knows that; he is dead." C. E. Cowan.

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A Story of New Spain

Padre Quintana drew a breath of relief as the red-tiled roof of the hacienda appeared in the hollow beneath him. He urged his small horse smartly down the gentle descent, for the midday August sun was all but intolerable, and thick clouds of fine, irritating dust rose about him from the road, on which no rain had fallen for three months. The rolling mesa extending on every side was burnt brown, the foot hills beyond a bright sere yellow. But the mountains bounding all showed a shadowy, cool, violet colour with a silvery powder of snow on their highest peaks, and the Californian sky was more purple than gentian.

The Padre, narrowing his eyes to escape this fierce glory of colour, and mopping his hot face with the sleeve of his gown, crossed the dry grass to the square of beaten ground in front of the hacienda, whose long, low, white-washed walls seem half submerged in the surrounding sea of golden wheat. A broad, covered gallery or verandah ran entirely round the house, which otherwise stood bare to the sun, without a tree or shrub to relieve its white glare. On this verandah lounged a couple of half-clad peons playing mora. They sprang up upon the Father's approach, and while one held his stirrup and led away the horse, the other ran to warn Donna Ysabel.

Pausing a moment to shake the grey dust from his robe, Padre Quintana followed him through the long sala and out again into cool, green fairyland. A second verandah surrounded the little patio or court, which was full of faintly rustling foliage, peppers and bananas and palms, and softly murmurous with the trickle of water in the stucco fountain. In the verandah, overlooking the patio, sat Donna Ysabel with her daughter Concepcion and three Indian maid-servants, sewing busily in the midst of piles of snowy linen and lace.

Mother and daughter, both dressed in sombre mourning garments, came forward to meet the Father. Donna Ysabel bent her proud, dark head for his blessing, but Concepcion fell softly on her knees, her brown braids trailing on the floor, and her round, childish face drooping. Padre Quintana laid his hand kindly on her head.

"Maria!" called Donna Ysabel to one of the maids. "Set a chair for the Father and fetch a fan and a fresh towel and a basin of water. And you, Josefa, bring instantly some azucarillos and water for his drink. Sit down, Father, you must be perishing with the heat."

"Truly, it is a little warm," said Padre Quintana, smiling.

"And no rain to come for a month at least—the dust will bury us!"

He sat down on a bench and leant his head against a pillar of the verandah. He was unusually tall for a Spaniard, and his slight tendency to corpulence carried no hint of grossness. His face was dark, and lined with care and fatigue rather than years, his eyes deep, grave yet fiery, his lips thin and beautifully cut. Donna Ysabel, small, straight, and milky white as became her pure Castilian blood, seated herself opposite him and took up again the piece of exquisite drawn-work on which she had been engaged. Concepcion perched on the verandah railing, giving a surreptitious kick to the heap of linen beside her.

"It was nearly dinner-time, Father," she said in the lingering, dragging Spanish accents. "I was afraid you would not get here in time."

"I shall be glad of it," said the Padre, "for I have not yet eaten to-day. And after dinner you shall confess all the mortal sins you have committed in my absence. See now if you have an appetite!"

But Concepcion did not return the Padre's smile. Her soft, long-lashed eyes met his forlornly, and he noted suddenly the stain of recent tears on her rounded cheeks.

"You are not well, my child," he said gently. "It seems to me you are paler than you should be. The heat, perhaps——"

"Concepcion is quite well," broke in the chill voice of

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Donna Ysabel. "Go, daughter, and tell Sandra to serve dinner out here, and at once."

The young girl rose and went away silently with downcast eyes.

"I have something to tell you which concerns her," said Donna Ysabel, "but it can wait till after dinner."

She folded her square of drawn-work, leant back in her low chair, and unfurling her black fan waved it to and fro in slow languorous spirals. No one looking at her would have supposed Donna Ysabel to be a grandmother. Her smooth, black hair, coiled high on the head, was without a thread of grey. Her large eyes were clear and brilliant as Concepcion's own, and somehow she had escaped the bane of Southern matronhood, that cruel redundance of outline which too often ends the brief reign of beauty! But a certain rigidity of hauteur about the Señora's thin lips and the coldness of her eyes robbed of charm this autumnal fairness.

"You had a good journey, Father?" she asked in her colourless tones.

"Good, my daughter—eight baptisms, two funerals, one marriage. Padre Josefo is to arrive at the Arroyo this week; so I shall be spared the long journey thither. In truth I find that my work hereabouts demands my whole time and strength."

"But you will rest a few days now?"

"I have to go on this afternoon to San Rafael to bless the new church there. I shall be gone four days. Father Vincent is lately dead, as you know, and there is no one yet to fill his place."

The Señora sighed. Then she stopped fanning herself for a moment, looking thoughtfully at the tip of her French shoe.

"I am sorry," she said slowly. "I had hoped we could persuade you to stay the night here. I have two things to ask at your hands. One concerns Concepcion; the other the young foreigner——"

"Ah, yes, the English engineer. He is still here, Mr. Fish? And his arm—he is mending?"

"He is quite well, I believe," said Donna Ysabel, still more slowly. "It is now three days that he has been out. Yet he makes no move to go. You understand that I cannot exactly ask him to go—but I will not have him here—at this time, I cannot."

"I have two things to ask at your hands."

"And you wish me to speak to him," said the Padre, looking out absently into the tangle of greenery. "Is he visible to-day?"

"That is the vexing part of it," said Donna Ysabel. "He has ridden to town this morning—on the horse that nearly killed him, and with his arm in a sling, imbecile!—and the groom says he will return at evening. He will return, you see! But now you will not be here to speak to him—fool of a foreigner!"

"Well, well—doubtless he will take his leave altogether now that he can get about. And the other thing—about Concepcion——"

"Ah, yes—Concepcion! Well, this—I have selected a husband for her."

"A husband—little Concepcion! Why, it was only yesterday——"

"She was sixteen, Father. At her age, I myself was already a wife. And you know that I have long desired the day when I could give her into another's keeping. I fear to leave her alone, and of late, Father—in short, I feel my life a matter of a few months, weeks perhaps, and therefore——"

Donna Ysabel indicated with a significant gesture the piles of wedding-linen which still strewed the floor of the verandah, then laid her finger to her lips. Concepcion came out, carrying a lace-edged cloth. Two of the maids set a small table close on the edge of the verandah, and Concepcion spread the cloth upon it while they went to fetch the dishes.

Padre Quintana submitted to be installed in a chair beside the table. His absent gaze rested on the light figure of Concepcion as she moved about and finally seated herself beside her mother. He halted and stammered twice during the lengthy grace, and when food was set before him he ate mechanically. Donna Ysabel's gesture of silence had not been necessary. Yet there was nothing apparently in her simple announcement to discompose him. He had heard similar statements many a time with no feeling save that of acquiescence.

Girls had to be married apparently—but little Concepcion! Only yesterday it seemed he had made the baptismal cross on her baby forehead, had taught her childish lips the first stammering prayer, had stretched his hands over her head shrouded in the veil of her first communion. And then so soon after her father's death—that strange death, of which he alone——

Here the Padre pulled himself together with an effort, answered a question of Donna Ysabel's, permitted a second serving of vermicelli soup and tortillas de maiz, accepted frijoles and declined the puchero, beef stewed with chillies. As he crumbled the home-made sweetmeats on his plate and drank his claret, his eyes and thoughts again strayed to Concepcion's pale face. She ate little and kept silence, leaving the conversation, as became a properly-reared young woman, to her elders. They talked desultorily of the prospects of the wheat harvest, the yield of the Tokay wines; and then of the Father's harvest of souls and of his labours in the spiritual vineyard, whose soil, like the golden land itself, needed only the unceasing bedewing of heavenly grace to prove matchlessly fertile.

At last to the relief of all the meal was ended. Immediately after service was held in the little chapel of the hacienda, all the servants being summoned to attend and afterwards given an opportunity to confess their sins. Then Donna Ysabel insisted that the Father should take his siesta. She conducted him to a hammock in a shaded and silent corner of the verandah, placed a fan and a glass of sugared water on a small

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table by his side, and was about to leave him when he laid a detaining hand on her arm.

"My daughter, I have some questions to ask you first. Concepcion is unhappy—has it to do with this marriage?"

"Father, all girls are so; I myself wept through the night before my marriage. But I married the man my mother brought me, as Concepcion will do, and she, too, will be reconciled."

"And this man—you have not told me his name?"

"Luis de Vargas."

Padre Quintana sprang out of the hammock, upsetting the little table; the glass splintered into fragments on the floor.

"Impossible! I have not understood you. Donna Ysabel—you do not mean——"

"I mean that my daughter will marry Luis de Vargas—my husband's old and trusted friend, a man against whom no one dares to breathe a word."

Donna Ysabel's voice was slow, and her eyes meeting the Padre's gaze expressed a cold surprise.

"My daughter——" he began; then paused, drew a long breath, and went on: "My daughter, you have made a mistake. That man is not the husband for your child."

"Father, you amaze me. Pray, why not?"

There was a pause. The imperious eyes of the woman met the kindling eyes of the priest.

"For one thing, he is more than twice her age. De Vargas is nearly as old as I. For another, he has been married. He has children older than Concepcion. For another—why do you stand here proposing to my face such a thing? It is impossible, I tell you. Dismiss him at once, do you hear?"

The Padre had lost control over himself. He shook with rage.

"Señor de Vargas is the accepted suitor of my daughter," said Donna Ysabel with a snake-like anger. "The betrothal has been announced, the wedding-day set——"

"In my absence!" interrupted the priest.

"In your absence, unavoidably and by no choice of mine. But I never dreamt you would object. Señor de Vargas is a gentleman of family, wealth, unblemished name. Moreover, this match was talked of two years ago, and my husband then gave his free consent to it, on the one condition that nothing should be said to Concepcion before the end of her sixteenth birthday. Señor de Vargas has behaved most honourably in observing this condition, and I have no hesitation now in giving Concepcion——"

"I command you to hesitate, to draw back, to break off this match while it is yet time. I forbid you to go on with it. Do you dare dispute my authority?"

Donna Ysabel's gaze fell before the concentrated fire of his eyes. She stood silent a moment.

"Your reasons?" finally she asked, scarcely opening her lips.

"You know that they are sufficient. It is not alone that the man is middle-aged and a widower, not alone that Concepcion's eyes are red with weeping because of him—no, I set against these things your anxiety, the approach of the time when you must leave your daughter. If that were all, I should sanction it, yes, though unwillingly. But not that man! Never! Donna Ysabel, believe without questioning me. If after my solemn warning, in spite of my commands, you bring about this marriage you will have committed a crime—a crime for which Heaven will as surely hold you to account as I stand here this moment!"

Padre Quintana turned away, wiping his forehead. Without looking at his hostess he went to the door and called one of the servants.

"Allon, my horse! Saddle at once—I must go on!"

He went on to the front verandah and there stood, his hands clenched in the folds of his black gown, looking sombrely out over the gold grain rippling in the breeze from the sea. Suddenly a small figure burst from one of the long windows and fell at his feet.

"Oh, Father, I heard you! You will save me? You won't let me be married? Oh, I think you must be an angel from Heaven!"

"Get up, Concepcion. Let go my hand."

Sobbing hysterically the girl seized his hand in both hers and kissed it.

"Get up, Concepcion! You are behaving like a baby. Let go my hand. Your mother will do what is best for you."

"She will make me marry him, and I can't bear it!"

"She will not make you marry Señor de Vargas. That I promise you. Do stop crying."

"But, Father, it is to be a week from to-day—and you are going away. And you do not know my mother——"

"I shall return in five days. Can you not trust me, silly child? Concepcion, tell me, why do you dislike this man?"

"I hate him! He is old, and fat—and—oh, oh, I can't bear him!"

"Reasons enough, surely! Yet"—the Padre looked piercingly at her—"tell me this—is there not someone else? If there were, I could almost—there is someone, eh?"

The girl's face grew rosy with surprise, and her long lashes swept her cheeks.

"And who is it? Why doesn't he run away with you?—no, Holy Saints, I don't mean that—but—come, his name?"

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Concepcion murmured something into the bosom of her gown.

"Ah, the Englishman! I thought as much. You have known him—how many days is it? Seven—nine—as long as that? My poor Concepcion, you are very foolish. A stranger, a foreigner! Here is my horse. And now go, with my blessing—I must say farewell to your mother."

He walked slowly back through the hall. Donna Ysabel stood where he had left her. At his approach she turned her head and looked at him with unfathomable eyes.

"You are going, Father?"

"I am going. Assure me first that you will heed my words. They were not spoken idly."

"Father—on your return we will speak again of this."

Their eyes met, clashed, and parried like steel blades.

When he had left the hacienda behind him, when it had sunk again into the hollow, foaming over with musky grain, even when in the midst of the mesa he watched the setting sun flash its red light along the low hills, the look of those eyes haunted the Father, and an evil fear woke in his heart. Once out of the ruddy west, a horseman came towards him, swinging gaily along and whistling a careless tune. By the outline of his lithe figure with its helpless arm he recognised the English engineer. But pulling his broad hat lower over his eyes the Father passed without even a greeting. His was in no mood for speech.

On the third day after this visit to the hacienda Bandini, a man riding at full speed across the trackless plain hailed the first gleam of the white church walls of San Rafael with thankful relief. It was then near sunset, and the mountains before him were glorious with colour, but the rider, urging his panting horse up the hill towards the church, noted only that the day had almost gone. The little adobe houses among which his horses toiled heavily upward were apparently empty and the village entirely deserted. A few chickens and a brown baby or two digging in the road seemed the only inhabitants.

All at once came from the church the sound of a chant, abruptly bursting forth, ceasing as abruptly. Then an interval of silence, then the voices again. It was the vesper service—of course. Dropping from his horse at the door, the stranger railed impatiently at this combination of circumstances, which meant a further delay, and then turned his attention to his over-ridden beast, whose appearance did not improve his temper.

The mare stood with feet planted wide apart, quickly heaving flanks, drooping head and bloody nostrils, while the breath came with an ominous wheeze. Biting his lips in anger the man unbuckled the cinch, and with his one available hand lifted off the cumbrous Mexican saddle. Then he walked up and down before the church door until, after a final outburst of rude melody, a final brief murmur, the people came pouring out. When the last of them had passed, scanning curiously the figure of the stranger silhouetted in the dusk against the pale yellow western sky, the Padre appeared in the doorway. Henry Fish took off his hat and went forward.

"Padre Quintana, I must speak to you at once."

"Señor Fish—you! You have come——"

"From the hacienda—in two hours."

"There is trouble! Is anyone ill?"

Leaning against the door-casing, his hands deep in his pockets, his eyes on the dark face of the priest, Fish told his brief story, halting now and then for the Spanish phrase.

"Concepcion sent me, as you may guess. I left the hacienda yesterday at her suggestion—it was time, perhaps! This afternoon at four o'clock came a note from her. I went to the house, saw her for a moment. The affair is arranged for to-morrow morning."

The Padre uttered an inarticulate exclamation!

"Concepcion has some idea that you have influence over the Señora and so——"

"It seems not," said the Padre grimly. "And you, señor, how do you happen to be here? You wish to marry Señorita Bandini yourself?"

"Certainly. She will marry me if her mother consents, not otherwise, she says. I have no idea that the Señora would regard me favourably as a son-in-law. So, Father, unless you interfere, it is possible that Concepcion will be married to-morrow morning—and not to me."

The young man's grey eyes looked out moody and frowning from under his thick, light brows. Where he stood the pale light was reflected in them, and made visible his brown, resolute face. To the Padre's scrutiny he looked every inch a man.

"So you could not persuade Concepcion to run away with you?" said the latter suddenly.

"Well, in that case I should scarcely be here now—but how did you know I had tried?"

"I guessed it. You are not a man to be stopped by trifles."

There was a tone of sarcasm in the words. Henry Fish laughed and looked with interest at this country priest.

"You are right. Short of carrying her off by force I have done all I could. But she dare not disobey her mother. *Probrecita!* she is but a child after all. And now, Father, to come to the point. Will you go back with me to-night and do what you can to stop this marriage? From what Concepcion said I judge that you have some good reason and also the power to prevent it. Well?"

"I do not know. You bewilder me," murmured the Padre confusedly. "It is true, I would prevent it if I could—but—deceitful woman, she takes advantage of my absence, defies my authority! What am I to do? I cannot permit it—and yet——"

"You will go back with me, then? It is settled? My horse must have a rest—three hours at least. We can easily do the distance before dawn——"

"No!" cried the Padre suddenly. "I will not go back! If Señora Bandini chooses to disregard my commands, the sin will be upon her own head. I can do nothing. To prevent her from sinning, would you have me commit a sin ten times greater? No, I tell you—you are mistaken, I can do nothing."

Shaken completely out of his usual stately calm, Padre Quintana attempted to push by the Englishman, whose sinewy arm barred the doorway.

"Father, you must come back with me. Concepcion is there, waiting for you—you will not desert her? You can move the Señora, or perhaps this man—Vargas——"

"De Vargas!" exclaimed the Padre suddenly. "It is true I might—I will go with you then, señor. I will do all I can. But if I fail—I cannot reproach myself."

"That's all right—you won't fail," said Fish promptly. "You know something, I can see—Concepcion was right after all. And now I must look to my horse—poor beast. It is past seven now, we will start at ten, and arrive by six easily. Good!"

So it happened. When they reached the hacienda only the servants were astir. The Padre commanded the

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Indian girl, who led him into the house, not to announce his arrival to the Señora, and retired to the room he usually occupied on his pastoral visits. Fish, after seeing the horses turned loose in the corral, wandered away over the fields. Here he threw himself down among the wheat, wet as it was with dew, and presently overcome with fatigue, fell into an uneasy sleep.

But there was no sleep for Padre Quintana. He lay on his bed facing the ornate crucifix of ebony and silver which alone relieved the bareness of the walls, and listened to the servants moving stealthily on their bare feet about the galleries and guest-rooms on either side of him. His heart was full of perplexity and bitterness.

No doubt these rooms were being prepared for the bridegroom and the priest, hastily summoned from somewhere to perform the shameful ceremony. This was how they meant to trick him! This was his authority in the house where his word had been unquestioned for twenty years! So long as Don Felipe, his friend, had lived, not one of the household would have dared disobedience — but now — and above all others, his wife! The Padre groaned and hid his face in the pillow. He could not stand by and see this thing done.

Presently the Indian girl brought in a little tray of hot chocolate and bread, and, while he ate, the Padre constrained his pride to put a question or two. The marriage was to take place at eleven in the chapel. Señor de Vargas was not in the house yet. No guests, the family being in mourning, save certain relatives of the groom and the two married daughters of the house, who with their husbands had arrived the day before.

Padre Quintana watched the sunlight brighten through the closed curtains of his window, listened to the gradual awakening of the household, the clatter of dishes from the kitchen, the sound of a broom vigorously polishing the tiles of the verandah, then outside the Señora's window a slow voice issuing orders. Presently came the thud of horses' feet on the dust of the roadway, then their clatter on the hard ground before the house, the jingle of bridle-chains and housings. The Padre peered out between his curtains.

The prospective bridegroom, sitting to perfection his magnificent black horse, was attended by three gentlemen, his brother and his two sons. With the sun-glitter on the silver trappings of their horses and their own gay-coloured finery, the little *cortège* was sufficiently pleasing to the eye. De Vargas himself on horseback appeared stalwart and noble. But, dismounting, the stately man seemed metamorphosed. His legs were shrunken from lack of use—for a Californian rarely stirs except on horseback—and scarcely served to support his body, now taking on the stoutness of middle age. Still, in his rich apparel of crimson velvet, gold lace and embroidery, linen fine as cobwebs, and silver spurs to his high-heeled boots, he looked a cavalier by no means to be disdained.

The bustle of this arrival, the gaiety of the attendant squires, the welcome which Señora Bandini graciously extended to them, fell unheeded on the Padre's ears. His eyes were riveted to the swarthy face of De Vargas until he had passed across the gallery and entered the house. He turned away from the window, sat down until the sound of voices had died away, and then called softly to a servant, bidding her find out which room Señor de Vargas occupied and if he were now within.

"That's all right—you won't fail."

When she returned the Padre followed her to the door she indicated, opening like all the others on the verandah. With a firm hand he knocked on the door, and, without waiting for an answer, walked in. De Vargas was there, sitting on the edge of the bed and dusting his boots with a large handkerchief. He looked up, and as he met the priest's eyes, changed colour under his brown skin; the pupils of his eyes narrowed cat-like, and his jaws shut together with a click like a trap.

The two men remained staring at each other for a moment. Before either of them could speak there was a light tap at the door on the opposite side of the room; it opened, and the Señora appeared on the threshold. Above her dark-blue robe her face was pale enough, but at sight of the priest it turned grey, and her hand went to her heart. On the instant, however, her steely eyes flashed defiance into his.

"I did not know you had returned, Father," she said icily.

"Not too soon, it seems," was the stern response. "However, there is time enough for what I have to do. Senora Bandini, you have behaved most treacherously—you thought to carry out your mistaken plans in defiance of me. But it was not the will of God you should succeed. Before you leave the room, Señor de Vargas

will have signified to you his intention of abandoning this marriage."

A scarcely suppressed sneer curled the Señora's pale lips! She turned to De Vargas, who still sat motionless.

"Luis, what have you to say to that?" she demanded ironically.

He rose, pushing his long hair back from his forehead with an angry gesture.

"It is quite false," he said loudly. "I have no intention of abandoning the marriage."

"Nevertheless, you will abandon it," said the Padre, advancing a step nearer and towering threateningly above him. "Do you understand, I will not permit it!"

Suddenly hatred blazed up in De Vargas' black eyes, and an ugly red flared in his sallow cheeks. He laughed.

"I will not allow this incredible insult to the memory of my dead friend. If you do not instantly withdraw your pretensions and leave this house I will expose you."

"Luis, what is all this, what is it he threatens——"

"Lies," muttered De Vargas hoarsely.

"Donna Ysabel, do you know what the man is, who enters your house as a son? Does not the spirit of your husband rise from his grave to warn you? Look at him! Look at the man who murdered your husband. Look at your own lover! Ask yourself what guilt——"

The Padre paused, his eyes fixed in terror on the Señora. With staring eyes and parted blue lips she leant against the wall, clutching at the bosom of her gown. Suddenly she staggered, and before he could reach her she fell heavily to the floor, striking her head against the iron foot of the bedstead.

There was no wedding that morning at the Casa Bandini, the bride in her white robes wept terrified tears; the bridegroom rode blackly away. The awe-stricken servants busied themselves in clearing away the untouched feast.

When Henry Fish approached the house he came upon Padre Quintana sitting in the verandah, silent and rigid, staring out into the hot sunshine. For some moments the Padre did not recognise him nor answer his anxious questions. At last he spoke drearily.

"It is all over—she is dead and will trouble you no more. Go and find Concepcion."

He started up, but, when the Englishman went on, stared vacantly after him and sat down again. They came out presently—Fish with a startled, grave face, and Concepcion clinging weeping to his arm. Then the Padre came back to himself. Ignoring the Englishman, he laid his hand gently on the girl's head.

"Farewell, my daughter—may you be happy. I am going away—a long journey of penance——"

"But you will return, Father!"

"I fear not, child."

He made the solemn sign of the cross above her, and went with slow, tremulous steps out of the house.

Neith Boyce.

A TEMPTING BILL OF FARE.

The April number of *PEARSON'S MAGAZINE*, now on sale, contains such a bewildering amount of good things that it is difficult to make a selection for special mention.

There is the new serial by H. G. Wells, entitled **THE WAR OF THE WORLD**, in which is described the invasion of this earth by the people of Mars. You must on no account miss the opening chapters of this thrilling story.

There are powerful stories by Max Pemberton, Guy Boothby, Cutcliffe Hyne, and other well-known writers.

Amongst the articles are included:

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An account of the quaint custom and curious beliefs of the Jews in connection with the great festival, now at hand.

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Photographs are here given of many champion dogs, and we are told of the numerous prizes won by, and the enormous prices obtained for them.

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Nearly all the best-known authors have favoured us with interesting particulars of their method of work. Photographs and autographs are given in each case.

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A most interesting and entirely novel form of amusement is here described. Full directions appear, adequately explained with numbers of diagrams.

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BELOW you will find ten pictures. Each represents the name of a gentleman who, on January 1st, 1897, was a Member of Parliament. If you look at the first sketch you will see that it represents Mr. J. G. Butcher. Who are the other people?

Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your list until four other sets have appeared. **DON'T SEND THEM IN UNTIL TUESDAY, APRIL 27, NEXT.** *Each set of five sheets must come to us in one envelope.*

Don't be discouraged if you cannot solve them all. Others may be no more clever than yourself. Send in forty-five, or forty, or even fewer.

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of four must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.

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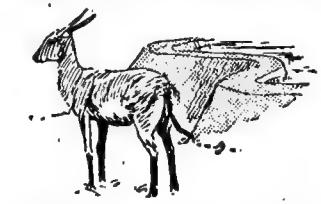

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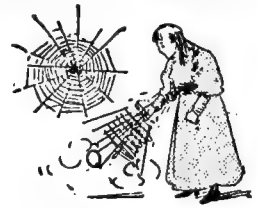
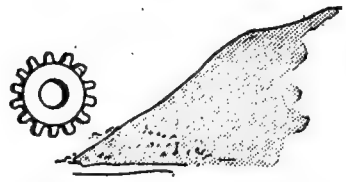


No. 4.....

No. 5.....



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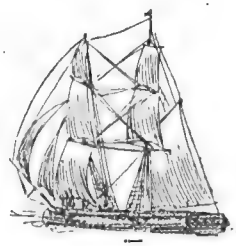
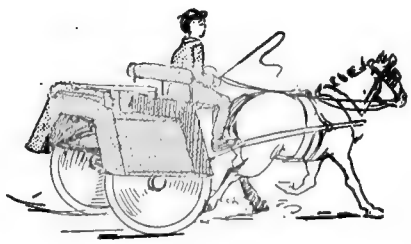


No. 7.....

No. 8.....

No. 9.....



No. 10.....

Remember these Things.

YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the surnames of the people, except in cases where the christian names are depicted.

Name.....

Address.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of M.P.'s.—Whitaker's Almanack, the London Post-Office Directory, Hazell's Annual, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

Miji-br-r-r-r-ick! Miji-br-r-r-ick! You fat rascal! What right have you to lie before the fire on that Persian rug, dozing and purring as happy and cosy as a cat can be while your master is out in the storm? Oh, you needn't come rubbing against my leg and singing any songs of peace to me! I'm tired of seeing such laziness and contentment. There you are, sleek, dignified, fat and lazy, while I am almost the exact opposite. Burr-r-r. what a cold night it is. There, now, wait until I take off my coat, and shake the snow off it. Then I will hang it up—so—take off my shoes, put on my slippers and jacket, draw my chair up to the fire, and light my pipe.

Now, now, I didn't say anything about petting you, did I? Well, if you must be petted I suppose I shall have to do it. There is no one else, is there? Miji-br-r-r-ick—old fellow—I am as happy as a lord to-night. You ought to have seen her to-night. But you don't know her, do you, old fellow? Never mind, you shall know her, for she is coming to-morrow to sit for me, and I will paint such a picture it will surely make my fortune. My fortune? Nay, our fortune—hers, yours and mine.

"Mmmmmmmm, mmmmmm, mmm."

Now, what are you saying? How did I meet her? Well, you see a poor artist like me doesn't often have such rare fortune, but it seemed as though an angel dropped from Heaven a moment to pluck from danger a wee doggie. There! there! don't arch your back and spit merely because I mentioned your bitterest foe. It was a wee doggie, and you abused it.

You haven't forgotten the other day when I let you out in the hall for a run about, hoping you might catch a fat mouse and save me the price of a piece of meat for you, and how you had a fight with a mite of a terrier, one-third your size?

It was through your fight with the little pup that I made an acquaintance with her. Who is she? Now you won't know until she comes here to live.

You remember how you proudly walked through the hall like a caged tiger that day, how you soon saw that your domain was invaded by the tiniest dog you ever saw. It was then that your sleek fur stood on end; that your gentle eyes shone fire, and you spat, as though you were trying to get the taste of a bad word out of your mouth. But the little rascal was not afraid of you. He came bravely to the attack, and you had to fight, and fight hard at that.

You made him run? Yes, and he ran right under the skirts of the prettiest lady you ever saw, just as she was coming by the door. I heard the row, and I looked to see what it was, when in you bounded. The little doggie, seeing your flight, took up the pursuit and darted between my legs. In an instant I saw that you had been in the wrong, and took off my cap to apologise for you.

What did this vision say, but that it was all the fault of Gyp. Gyp—indeed! As if I didn't know better. How could anything belonging to her, living about her, do anything wrong?

But, anyway, we made an acquaintance with each other, she with Gyp in her arms, and I with you safe behind me I learned that she sometimes came here to give music lessons to a friend of hers, an artist, on the floor above. I didn't know until then that there was any floor above.

I suppose her friend must be making great progress in music, for she gets a lesson every day. I have seen her every day. And some days I would walk a short distance with her. "Her father did not like the idea of her going to see her friend," said she, "so it was better that I did not call until I met her in some other way." But every time I walked with her, and every time I spoke to her, the blood surged madly through my veins until I could hardly keep from telling her how much I adored her.

* * * * *

Mrow-ow-ow. Mrr-r-ow. Mr-ow-ow-um-ummmmm. I wonder when that foolish fellow will come back? Here he has been out for an hour or two, when he should have been hard at work. And what a bustle he was in this morning. The place was all upside down. After the hint he gave me last night about the fat mouse, I think he might have let me have a little quiet here by myself this morning, so that I might have hunted up something good to eat.

Heigh-ho! Men never can understand cats. We are too sensitive for them. That is the reason we get along better with women. Their natures are so much like our own.

Well, he cleaned up all the place this morning. Everything was dusty and dirty before. Now it is clean

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and bright. There is not much of it, to be sure, but still it makes rather an attractive picture, even for a well-bred creature like myself. I do hope she is a thoroughbred. I hate those models with their loud talk and boisterous laugh.

Well, well, there is his step on the stair and his whistle. Here he is, with his arms full of bundles. Why, where did he get the money? I heard him complaining all day that he was broke, and muttering bad words under his breath.

Why, he has lost his ring, that beautiful ring that I admired so much. And I know he thought so much of it. I am sorry he lost it. Mmmmm. Meow! Meow! Mmmmm. He's looking out of the window. There he runs to the door. She is coming. Meow! She is here.

Oh, what a darling girl! Her fluffy brown hair falling over her rosy cheeks; her dimples and her long lashes. Her dark eyes and that beautiful blue suit which clings to her figure so closely.

My! My! Wow! What? Miji-br-r-r-ick! You're getting excited. What is that curious creature hanging about her neck, Miji-br-r-ick? It is detestable. Well, I shall soon see, for she is taking it off.

How he watches her every action. How caressingly he speaks to her. And she seems to avoid looking at him.

Will she have a cup of tea after her cold walk? Tea? Tea? Are my ears deceiving me? Why, I haven't smelt tea since I came to this place; that is, except some evil-smelling stuff the caretaker sent up one day when he was ill. He must have fallen heir to some grocer's shop.

And then they talk of many things—the weather, music, art, and all the rubbish that mortals in love usually talk about. Mortals in love did I say? Well, don't correct me. He confessed as much to me, and my eyes tell me the same about her. Of course he doesn't see that she loves him. Trust a man for that. Why, he wouldn't believe it if I told him myself.

It was getting late, and he could not paint her this afternoon, and he told her so. Would she come again? Yes. She would come again to-morrow afternoon, and every afternoon until the picture was finished.

Under such conditions the picture would never be finished. Now she is about to go. She picks up that creature she had about her neck when she came in. How its vicious little eyes glisten in the firelight. Why, the impudent thing! I believe it is defying me! You will, will you? Mrowoow! Mr-r-rw! Fizz! Br-r-r! Miji-br-r-r-ick!

* * * * *

It is all past now. I shall never do it again, but when I saw those little beady eyes blinking at me I sprang for it and tore the creature from her hand. I pawed and shook it. I slapped it, and was wrestling with it on the floor when she tried to take it away from me. What, take first my master, then my prey? The only thing I had seen all day that looked as though it might be eaten.

I carry in my paw four sharp claws, and she found it out, for with one movement I sent them down on her hand so hard they made great ugly scratches in her soft, white flesh. And the blood came. And there was a terrible clamour. For when she saw the blood she screamed gently and quietly sank downwards. If it hadn't been for him she would have struck the floor. But his arms were round her, and he was crying, "Oh, my darling girl! How did it happen? Sweetheart, it will soon be all right. My dearest!" and other idiotic expressions.

Pretty soon she opened her eyes. She may not have heard his last words, but I think she did. Any way she saw she was in his arms, and instead of struggling to get away she simply twisted herself round a little, threw up one hand over his shoulder, rested her head quietly on his breast, and fainted again. This spell was longer than the other. When she came to this time he was kissing her, and she was blushing, oh, so red.

Well, I haven't heard how it came out yet. You see, when he finished kissing her, she explained how it happened. Then I went out. I took a pane of glass with me, as I was in such a hurry to go. It was eight storeys down. But I knew the window opened on a verandah a little below, and alighted there.

He came down and picked me up about an hour later. He was trembling with joy, and said he would forgive me. That it was through me he was the happiest man on earth. That she loved him, and, oh, such nonsense.

But when it was all over, and I had eaten my supper, he sat in front of the fire and gazed into the dancing flames. Then he looked sad, then sadder, and finally two big tears rolled down his cheeks as he softly said "Miji-br-r-r-ick." I wonder why?

Esther Summers.

RESULT OF JUMBLED PICTURE COMPETITION.

No. 2.

The sum of £2 2s. has been forwarded to Harry Nobbs, 67, Frobisher Road, Hornsey, N.

A bottle of *Home Notes Bouquet* has been forwarded to the following five: Miss Jessie Holyoake, 16, Norfolk Street, Leamington Spa; Alan T. Jones, Tregleath, Newport, Mon.; S. Barker, 6, Corbett Street, Hanbury Street, Spitalfields, E.; C. Puttock, 123, Malvern Road, Kilburn, N.W.; and Miss E. Philson, 2, Queensland Street, Liverpool.

Result of Watch Competition.

No. 2.

The time at which the watch stopped was 1hr. 59min.

The Five-guinea Watch has been awarded to Sergt. A. E. Smith, Forton Barracks, Gosport, Hants., who alone correctly named this time.

TO AMUSE and at the same time to interest our readers we have retained the services of the most expert graphologist of the present day, and even those who do not believe in the art will soon find themselves convinced if they care to send along a specimen of their hand. writing upon an unruled sheet of paper with their usual signature and full address. From this their characters will be told. These characters will not necessarily be flattering. They will be bare statements of the truth. In each case six stamps and a stamped addressed envelope must be inclosed. All letters should be marked "Graphologist," and forwarded to *"PEARSON'S WEEKLY" BUILDING, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.*

The Shadow-Hand

By Louis Tracy.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Search for West.

Jack Heathcote and Cécile took up their abode at Quiltering, the birth-town of Annie West's husband, about ten days after Edith's arrival in Paris. They immediately set about prosecuting their inquiries.

"It is a wonder the creature does not reply to our advertisement," said Jack sometimes.

"But you are queer," Cécile would answer; "carpenters' wives do not read often advertisements in newspapers, I think?"

"Most likely she's dead," suggested Jack.

"No—not *most* likely. Death is a big thing, of which people talk when it occurs. As we have heard nothing, it is a probability that she lives, and that her life is uneventful. You are not a great reasoner, sir."

"I never thought that I was," said Jack. "But *you* are, and I've got you—which comes to the same thing."

"You have not got me yet. Find for me Edith, and then—you shall."

He caught her roughly, rumpling her, kissing her, grown bold by assured possession.

"That is against rules," she said crossly. "We are not children. Do not let me think that you have more lips than brains."

Cécile broke into the sitting-room of their inn.

They ransacked Quiltering, speaking to nearly every one of its inhabitants, for nearly three weeks, and found nothing.

In the second week they received fifteen letters, forwarded by the London agency, from fifteen Annie Wests; but further correspondence elicited the fact that only two of them had lived in Dorsetshire, and only one was named "Hall" previous to her marriage; and Hall was not a first husband's but her maiden name. For some days Jack Heathcote was a busy scribe, writing letters of answer and inquiry all over the country.

At the end of the third week, Cécile broke into the sitting-room of their inn, with the glad tidings:

"I have found his mother! I have seen her!"

"Good news!" cried Jack, hoping for a kiss on the strength of this evangel; "has she told you about him, then?"

"No—she cannot speak—she cannot see—she cannot hear——"

"Oh, I say!"

"She is a hundred and fifteen years old. I found her in an almshouse at Tlahual, twelve miles from here. She has been buried away there for the last thirty years. That is why we did not hear of her till now."

"Then we are exactly where we were before," said Jack.

"No. You are a mere child. We have advanced—a step."

"I don't see it, then."

"That is because you go with your eyes half shut People live in a sort of mental moonlight. The sun does not shine for them, in general."

"I must try to improve," said Jack, making a mouth.

"No—I like you just as you are. Do not change a little bit. It is because you are just as you are that I—I love you so. But do you not see that we have advanced? West does not *know* that his mother is dead, for she is alive, though he may imagine that she is dead. *We* therefore now know something more about his life and its concerns than he knows himself. And we can use that knowledge at once."

"But how, darling?"

"We will put a story in all the papers; we will say that his mother is just dead, and left him a large legacy."

"But we don't know his Christian name."

"You are playing, I think? Did we not get his Christian name in the register of marriage?"

"Oh, aye, true enough. I admit, darling, that I am no good. But as he has not answered the advertisement for his wife, the chances are that he won't see this new one either."

"But this," said Cécile, "is the advertisement of a *legacy*. The working public take an enormous interest in *legacies*—in a definite piece of news, not a vague promise of something unknown. Besides, this new advertisement is directed to a man, not a woman. Men read these things in the papers more. If John West is not a reader his fellow workmen are. They will see his own name plain before them; they will speak of it. He will see it."

Her eyes wore their strange, far-away look.

"Suppose he has emigrated?" said Jack.

"No; he has not emigrated."

"How *do* you know that, Cécile?"

"If there were one reason against it that would make it improbable," she answered; "if there are two, they make it almost incredible; if there are three, the three together make it impossible."

"And *are* there three?"

"Yes. People in general do not emigrate, for one thing, though in general they migrate. Then again, carpenters emigrate least of all tradespeople, for the rough carpentering work of pioneering can be done by hands unskilled. It is the landsmen and the metal-workers who emigrate chiefly. But emigrants, seldom more than once or twice—but at least once or twice—write home from abroad. The shock of the great change of environment makes them think with fondness of home. It is only when they tarry in the same country with their left ones that they lack the impulse to write. John West, the carpenter, never wrote. He is in England—probably not far from here."

"Darling, how shrewd you are! What a cunning little——"

Jack was in prone career to break rules again, but Cécile fled.

Two days afterwards the advertisement of the legacy was published broadcast. Of fifty letters received from "John Wests" throughout the country, Cécile held up one, saying:

"This is the right!"

He lived in Manchester, and awaited instructions. They telegraphed that they would present themselves before him the next day.

And on the next day at noon Cécile stood alone at the door of a mean cottage, in a mean, grimy street made up of cottages all precisely like one another. At her knock a tall, raw-boned woman of fifty, with rolled-up sleeves, evidently straight from the wash-tub, opened the door.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A NAME.

"DID your husband tell you of a legacy advertised——" began Cécile.

"I should just think he did!" said a loud voice. "He can think of nothing else. He's been out on the booze ever since——"

"Well, can one speak to you about it?"

"Yes; you can come in."

She led the way into a parlour, neatly, but meanly and garishly furnished.

"You were married before, I think?" said Cécile.

"I was."

"And named 'Hall'?"

"Yes."

"'Annie'?"

"Yes; but I don't hardly like all this prying——"

"I mean no harm, you know. I have in my pocket £50 for you, and if you do not answer my questions I shall simply give the money to your husband, that is all."

"Who are you, miss?"

"My name is Cécile. I have the management of this money-matter. I wish you would be friendly with one. I want to ask you a few questions, merely."

"Well, ask away."

"You were once employed as servant near Crossley in the house of the Hon. Ernest Wentworth, I think?"

The woman threw her mind back down the years and nodded.

"You remember his wife?"

"What, the Frenchwoman?"

"Yes."

"I should just think I did. She was a pickle, I can tell you, in the house."

"Did your husband tell you of a legacy advertised?"

"Ah, yes—a 'pickle.' It is well. She was not a very good wife, I think?"

"No, the messer, that she wasn't. Wasn't there something about another man—— ?"

"But, yes! What was his name?"

"Oh, I don't think I can remember his name, after all these years. But I saw him several times. She used to meet him in the park, the horrid thing."

"Yes! Tell me! What was he like?"

"He was a tall man, with a pale face."

"That all?"

"That's all that I can remember. He was a foreigner, of course. He used to wear coloured waistcoats."

"Well, but that is something!" said Cécile, "a tall man, pale, with coloured waistcoats, and a foreigner. But his name! can't you remember?"

"Stop a bit—I'm thinking. No—I can't remember."

"Didn't it begin with an 'L'?"

"You are right! It did! 'Le' something. I knew it well once—but it's gone now."

"It was a French name, I think, beginning with 'Le'?"

"Yes, it was French right enough."

"You are sure it began with 'Le'?"

"Quite sure."

"'Lebon'?"

"No."

"'Lefrère'?"

"No."

"'Lemaitre'?"

"Right you are!" cried Annie West in a rapture of recollection, "that was it!"

"'Lemaitre,' then. Very well. I thank you much. What was he?"

"We servants knew him as 'the Doctor.' He was Dr. Lemaitre."

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Cécile was ushered into the presence of a white-haired old lady.

"Excellent! You have told me much. I will add £10 more to the £50 on my own account."

"Oh, for that matter, you ought to be able to find out all about him from the Darrels. I don't know if they are still thereabouts; but they used to live about ten miles from our place, at—at Something House—I forget the name of it at this minute. It was the Darrels that Lemaitre was staying with at the time, you see."

"You are very good," said Cécile. "Here is the money. And tell your husband to go and see his old mother, who is still alive in the almshouse at Tlahual, and not be a brute. That of the legacy was a little trick to get at you, you see!"

She laughed, and Annie West, with the money in her hand, laughed, as they went together to the door.

"It's only a rough hand, miss, but you're welcome to it, I'm sure," she said, holding out her water-crinkled fingers.

Cécile walked back to the hotel where Jack waited her, and the same hour they set out by train to return to Crossley. Cécile wanted to pay a visit to the house of the Darrels.

They were a family of some importance in the county, but nearly extinct. On sending up her card, Cécile was ushered into the presence of a white-haired old lady in the drawing-room, who received her kindly. She told her errand. She wished to obtain some information of a Dr. Lemaitre who had been a guest of the house some twenty years before.

"Really," said Mrs. Darrell, "I am afraid I can tell you hardly anything. He was introduced into the house by a friend, and did not stay long. We have not been brought into *rapport* with him for many years. What is it you wish to know of him—his address?"

"That would help me a great deal," said Cécile.

"Well I *think* he wrote us a letter from Paris just before his visit, and in that case we are certain still to have it. Mr. Darrel, poor man, never destroyed a document."

"It would be difficult to find, would it not?" said Cécile.

"It would be difficult?—Yes. But if you will leave me your address, I will find it and send it you," Mrs. Darrel said, nodding and smiling.

"You are too good. I *should* like to know you better," murmured Cécile as she shook hands.

The next morning she had in her hand the twenty-year-old address of Dr. Lemaitre—17, Rue de Printemps, Paris. At ten the same night she and Jack were at the door of the Hilton's town house in Hyde Park.

"Good-night, darling," she said. "Go to bed, will you? You look so tired, poor boy. To-morrow, remember, we start for Paris. Be here by eleven. Good-night."

Almost immediately on entering she came upon Arthur, lounging at full length upon a couch.

"I am so glad to see you!" said Cécile. "I did not know you were in town. Is there any news?"

"Nothing to speak of," answered Arthur, recomposing himself among the cushions. "Lady Hilton is somewhat better, and *I* expect shortly to leave for Egypt."

"To Egypt? But no—you would not go, I think?"

"Yes, I should go. Can you suggest any reason why not?"

"Edith?" said Cécile.

Arthur winced.

"Edith," he said, "has chosen her own path, Miss Delisle. If she could desert me—her home—in the company of such vermin as Danton, you will admit that her affection for me, for any of us, could not have been very——"

"But hear me!"—Cécile in her eagerness stooped to her knees before him—"she is not with Dr. Danton! I know her—trust me to that extent! I admit that his being here on that day looks bad, but have faith in her—in me—her affection for you *is* very deep—don't you think I would know? If you went to Egypt now, that might spoil all——"

"It is quite likely, however, that I may have to go."

"When?"

"Within a few weeks."

"What, then, is the matter with Egypt?"

"You would hardly understand, I think. There is a vile

"I am so glad to see you," said Cécile.

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man named Arabi Pasha who is giving some trouble there, and my regiment has received an intimation from the War Office to hold itself in readiness to proceed to the front. Ah, it is of no great importance, Miss Delisle. Nothing is of the slightest importance."

"That point of view you will change—only wait!" cried Cécile, and ran upstairs, where she was announced to Lady Hilton, who still lay on her back on a couch.

"Dear Cécile!" cried the old lady, "I am overjoyed. I was really anxious about you, you know. What *have* you been doing?"

"You are to go first," said Lemaitre.

"Poking about—making inquiries."

"About Edith?"

"Indirectly, yes."

"Have you discovered anything?"

"I may soon."

"What have you done to that poor Heathcote?"

"I have sent him to a hotel to bed."

"Has he looked after you well, dear?"

"Yes, he is good. I am taking him with me to Paris to-morrow."

"To-morrow, dear! Why, you live in a whirlwind, my child."

"Yes—to-morrow. Can you give me Dr. Danton's Paris address? He wrote you once, I think, from Paris?"

"Yes. I will put Mary on the hunt for it presently, dear. Have you had anything to eat? You must be so tired, dear Cécile."

Cécile was soon fast asleep beside Lady Hilton, who would not let her leave her.

In the morning she found that Dr. Danton's address, about the time of the end of the old year, was "17, Rue de Printemps, Paris."

Cécile started violently. It was the same address as the address of Dr. Lemaitre twenty years ago.

She had decided that the two were known to each other. Now she decided that they were *intimately* associated. The two doctors had lived, as doctors sometimes do, in the same house.

It did not dawn upon her, clever as she was, that Danton and Lemaitre were the same man. The probability of such a complexity of circumstances was too far away to occur to even her keen intellect.

She went groping on in the dark, coming ever nearer to light.

That day, before she and Heathcote had started for Paris, the advertising agency in London which had done all their work for them, telegraphed to its Paris branch this advertisement, for insertion in the French papers:

EDITH. Be good, and come back. But above all, avoid D. He is a man of dark antecedents, and will prove *dangerous*. You know I would not tell you false.—CÉCILE.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BIRD AND THE SERPENT.

On the night following their discovery of Edith, Hawke and Lemaitre stood before No. 13, Rue Morcelle.

"You are to go first," said Lemaitre. "You are to present yourself suddenly. And you are to claim her with paternal vigorousness. You are to be rough—be rough—but not too rough. It is not intended that you should strangle her, Mr. Hawke. You gently terrify her, that is all. Later on, say in a quarter of an hour, I shall appear as a delivering Perseus and slayer-of-monsters."

Mr. Hawke rolled up the five stairs, and tapped at No. 165, while Lemaitre went walking about the neighbouring streets. The door was locked, and no one opened to Hawke.

"She must be out," he said.

But, even while he stood in doubt, there was a quick woman's step behind him. He turned sharply round, and a shriek went ringing through the house.

Edith's two arms flung out; her deathly face worked horribly; but no sound came from her lips. She fell forward, and was caught by Hawke.

That face had been fearfully present with her from the day when she first saw it. If she opened her eyes in the darkness of night, before her, in a bluish, sepulchral halo, stood the face of Hawke; not the face of Arthur, or the face of Cécile, but the face of Hawke, whom she had seen but once! All she could dream of terror, all she could imagine of heinous loathsomeness, was embodied for her in that visage of horror. She dreaded it worse than the grave; she hated it worse than hell.

"Now, here's a darned to-do!" said Mr. Hawke, holding her up in the dim passage, lighted by only one lamp. "I never did like this job!"

He searched her pockets, in which he found her key, and, half lifting her, opened the door, and laid her in the dark on the bed.

In five minutes Edith opened her eyes. She felt rather than saw the presence of Hawke near her, and, in wild dismay, leapt up from the bed and rushed towards the door.

He caught her by the arm.

"Come, you're not a child!" he said, shaking her a little. "Who's going to hurt you, eh? Is that the way you treat your own father? Haven't you got no lamp?"

"Yes," she gasped; "I promise you—I will light it—only—don't touch me—I am very poor—I am so wretched—if you have any pity——"

"All right—pull yourself together.

A shriek went ringing through the house.

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I want to take you away—quick. There's that man, Dr. Danton, he is on my track; he does not want me to have you—he wants to take you away from me. But he shan't! See, I have come all this way to claim you. Quick now!"

"Dr. Danton?" she panted. "Does *he* know?"

"Yes, I tell you. He's on my track. Quick now——"

At that moment there was a tap on the opening door, and Danton walked in.

Edith was holding a trembling match to her little lamp.

"Ah—I thought I heard you, sir!" he said sternly to Hawke. "How dare you?"

Hawke assumed an appearance of great terror.

"Well, well," he said, "so you've caught me again?"

"Leave this room!" Danton pointed majestically toward the door.

"That I shan't! She's my own daughter, I suppose?"

"Quick, sir!"

Hawke backed reluctantly toward the opening.

"But I'll be back again," he cried threateningly as Danton banged the door upon him.

"Miss Wentworth—Edith——" said Danton, bowing before the trembling girl, "I am so glad to be able to rid you of that presence. I have been tracking his movements for some weeks. I can almost promise that he shall never molest you again—if you will only put yourself into my hands."

She sank into a chair, staring before her, Danton sitting in front of her.

"You cannot, you know, for one thing, continue to live in a den of this kind. I wonder it has not killed you, my poor child."

His voice was full of genuine tenderness. Edith was speechless.

"You must let me obtain suitable lodgings for you this very night. Promise me that."

"No, no—I will stay here, please."

"Ah—you will be unkind to me? to *me*, Edith? No—I cannot believe that," said Danton, clapping his knee with a folded newspaper, which he held in his hand. "You cannot give yourself so much pain. If you pain me you pain yourself, and if you pain yourself you pain me. There is only one way to be free and happy—we must be married in a week or two."

"Oh, I cannot!" she cried, covering her face. "I cannot marry anyone! *You* should know it—*you* know what I am."

"Yes, I know what you are. You are me—you are mine. I am not an English aristocrat. I do not at all remember or care who your father, your mother was. I only know that you are flesh of my flesh, soul of my soul—Edith!"

The man once more was breathing his energy of passion into her, frowning upon her with his old mesmeric dominancy.

The bird, fascinated by the eye of the serpent, wishes to fly and is paralysed. Only the wings flutter—flutter, and with down-bent beak, with a strange trance in its little fixed and staring eyes, it gazes on into the glittering, saffron eyes of the snake, still fluttering—fluttering.

"Promise, Edith! Promise now!"

"What can I do?" she wailed, with writhing body. "What can I say? I am utterly helpless—utterly alone and helpless!"

Danton slapped down the newspaper on the table rather angrily.

"You shall *not* be cruel to us both. In two weeks? Say yes."

She heaved a sigh, which was consent.

"Very good," he said, relaxing his frown. "I sympathise with your reluctance, poor child! I am so much older than you, is it not so? But I will be kind to you, Edith. I will be a father as well as a husband. And now I shall go, and look you out a suitable lodging——"

"Wait!—one moment—stay here—I must go outside for a moment!" she cried with strange excitement, with panting bosom.

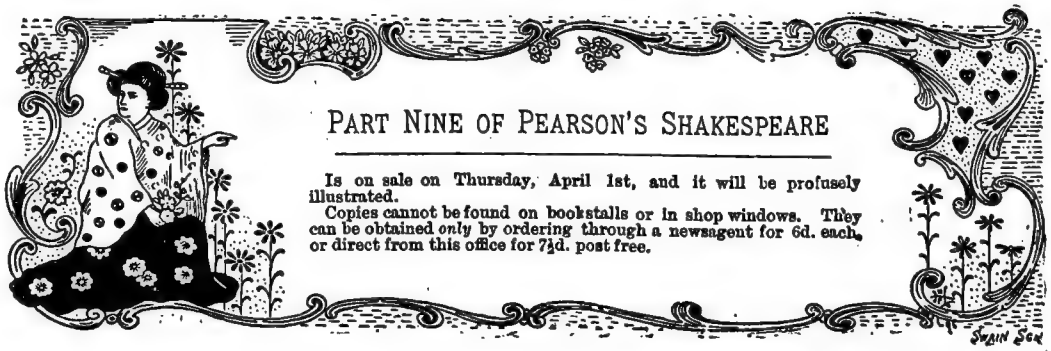
She went hurriedly to the door, snatching up her hat as she passed by the bed.

Her eye had caught these words on the newspaper beneath the lamp:

EDITH. Be good, and come back. But above all, avoid D. He is a man of dark antecedents, and will prove *dangerous*. You know I would not tell you false.—CÉCILE.

Danton, with impatience growing into frenzy, waited in the room an hour. Edith was flying away, away—in wildest panic—through the streets of Paris.

(To be continued.)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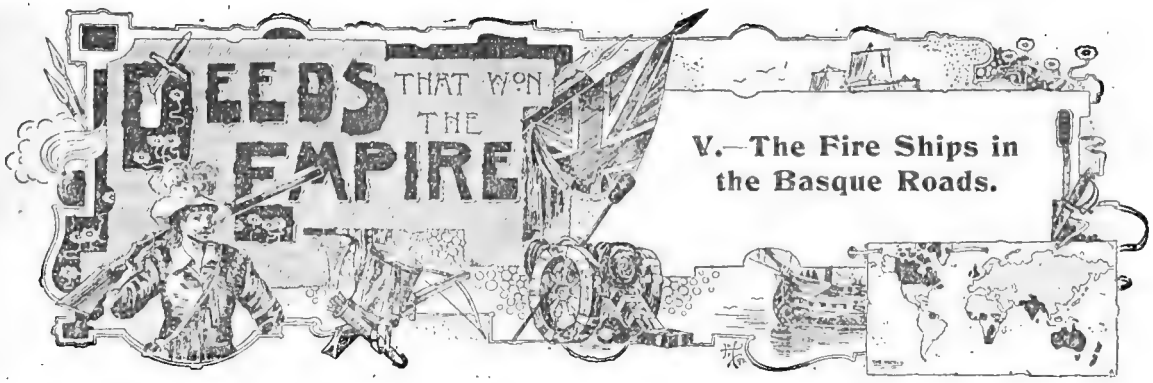

V.—The Fire Ships in the Basque Roads.

On the night of April 11th, 1809, Lord Cochrane steered his floating mine against the gigantic boom that covered the French fleet lying in Aix roads.

The story is one of the most picturesque and exciting in the naval annals of Great Britain. Marryat has embalmed the great adventure and its chief actor in the pages of *Frank Mildmay*, and Lord Cochrane himself—like the Earl of Peterborough in the seventeenth century, who captured Barcelona with a handful of men, and Gordon in the nineteenth century, who won great battles in China, walking-stick in hand—was a man who stamped himself, as with characters of fire, upon the popular imagination.

To the courage of a knight-errant Cochrane added the shrewd and humourous sagacity of a Scotsman. If he had commanded fleets he would have rivalled the victories of Nelson, and perhaps even have outshone the Nile and Trafalgar. And to warlike genius of the first order Cochrane added a certain weird and impish ingenuity which his enemies found simply resistless.

Was there ever a cruise in naval history like that of Cochrane in his brig, misnamed the *Speedy*, a mere coasting tub that would neither steer nor tack, and whose entire broadside Cochrane himself could carry in his pocket? But in this wretched little brig, with its four-pounders, Cochrane captured in one brief year more than fifty vessels, carrying an aggregate of 122 guns, took 500 prisoners, kept the whole Spanish coast, off which he cruised, in perpetual alarm, and finished by attacking and capturing a Spanish frigate, the *Gamo*, of thirty-two heavy guns and 319 men.

What we have called the impish daring and resource of Cochrane is shown in this strange fight.

He ran the little *Speedy* close under the guns of the huge *Gamo*, and the Spanish ship was actually unable to depress its guns sufficiently to harm its tiny antagonist. When the Spaniards tried to board, Cochrane simply shoved his pigmy craft a few yards away from the side of his foe, and this curious fight went on for an hour. Then, in his turn, Cochrane boarded, leaving nobody but the doctor on board the *Speedy*; but he played the Spaniards a characteristic trick.

One half his men boarded the *Gamo* by the head, with their faces elaborately blackened; and when, out of the white smoke forward, some forty demons with black faces broke upon the astonished Spaniards, they naturally regarded the whole business as partaking of the black art, and incontinently fled below. The number of Spaniards killed and wounded in this fight by the little *Speedy* exceeded the number of its own entire crew; and when the fight was over forty-five British sailors had to keep guard over 263 Spanish prisoners.

Afterwards, in command of the *Impérieuse*, a fine frigate, Cochrane played a still more dashing part on the Spanish coast, destroying batteries, cutting off supplies from the French ports, blowing up coast roads, and keeping perspiring battalions of the enemy marching to and fro to meet his descents.

On the French coast, again, Cochrane held large bodies of French troops paralysed by his single frigate. He proposed to the English Government to take possession of the French Islands in the Bay of Biscay, and to allow him, with a small squadron of frigates, to operate against the French seaboard. Had this request been granted, he says, "neither the Peninsular war nor its enormous cost to the nation, from 1809 onwards, would ever have been heard of!"

"It would have been easy," he adds, "as it always will be easy in case of future wars, so to harass the French coasts as to find full employment for their troops at home, and so to render operations in foreign countries impossible."

If England and France were once more engaged in war—*absit omen!*—the story of Cochrane's exploits on the Spanish and French coasts might prove a very valuable inspiration and object lesson.

Cochrane's professional reward for his great services in the *Impérieuse* was an official rebuke for expending more sails, stores, gunpowder and shot than any other captain afloat in the same time!

The fight in the Basque roads, however—or rather in the Aix roads—has great historical importance. It finally destroyed French power on the sea, and gave Britain an absolute supremacy. No fleet actions took place after its date between "the meteor flag" and the tricolour, for the simple reason that no French fleet remained in existence. Cochrane's fire-ships completed the work of the Nile and Trafalgar.

Early in 1809 the French fleet in Brest, long blockaded by Lord Gambier, caught the British napping, slipped out unobserved, raised the blockades at L'Orient and Rochefort, added the squadrons lying in these two places to its own strength, and, anchoring in the Aix roads, prepared for a dash on the West Indies.

The success with which the blockade at Brest had been evaded, and the menace offered to the West Indian trade, alarmed the British Admiralty. Lord Gambier, with a powerful fleet, kept guard outside the Aix roads, but if the blockade failed once it might fail again. Eager to destroy the fleet France possessed, the Admiralty

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strongly urged Lord Gambier to attack the enemy with fire-ships, but Gambier, grown old, had visibly lost nerve, and he pronounced the use of fire-ships a "horrible and un-Christian mode of warfare."

Lord Mulgrave, the First Lord of the Admiralty, knowing Cochrane's ingenuity and daring, sent for him, and proposed to send him to Basque roads to invent and execute some plan for destroying the French fleet. The Scotsman was uppermost in Cochrane in this interview, and he declined the adventure on the ground that to send a young post-captain to execute such an enterprise would be regarded as an insult by the whole fleet, and he would have every man's hand against him.

Lord Mulgrave, however, was peremptory, and Cochrane yielded, but on reaching the blockading fleet was met by a tempest of wrath from all his seniors.

"Why," they asked, "was Cochrane sent out? We could have done the business as well as he. Why did not Lord Gambier let us do it?"

Lord Gambier, who had fallen into a sort of gentle and pious melancholy, was really more occupied in distributing tracts among his crews than in trying to reach his enemies; and Harvey, his second in command, an old Trafalgar sea-dog, when Cochrane arrived with his commission, interviewed his Admiral, denounced him in a white heat on his own quarter-deck, and ended by telling him that "if Nelson had been there he would not have anchored in the Basque roads at all, but would have dashed at the enemy at once."

This outburst, no doubt, relieved Admiral Harvey's feelings, but it cost him his flag, and he was court-martialed and dismissed from the service for the performance.

Cochrane, however, set himself with characteristic daring and coolness to carry out his task. The French fleet consisted of one huge ship of 120 guns, two of 80 guns, eight seventy-fours, a 50-gun ship, and two 40-gun frigates—fourteen ships in all. It was drawn up in two lines under the shelter of powerful shore batteries, with the frigates as outguards.

As a protection against fire-ships, a gigantic boom had been constructed half a mile in length, forming two sides of a triangle, with the apex towards the British fleet.

Over this huge floating barrier powerful boat squadrons kept watch every night. Cochrane's plan of attack was marked by real genius. He constructed three explosion vessels—floating mines on the largest scale.

Each of these terrific vessels contained no less a quantity than *fifteen hundred* barrels of gunpowder, bound together with cables, with wedges and moistened sand rammed down betwixt them, forming, in brief, one gigantic bomb.

On the top of this huge powder magazine was piled, as a sort of agreeable condiment, hundreds of live shells and thousands of hand-grenades; the whole, by every form of marine ingenuity, compacted into a solid mass which, at the touch of a fuse, could be turned into a sort of floating Vesuvius. These were to be followed by a squadron of fire-ships.

Cochrane who, better perhaps than any other soldier or sailor that ever lived, knew how to strike at his foes through their own imagination, calculated that when these three huge explosion vessels, with twenty fire-ships behind them, went off in a sort of saltpetre earthquake, the astonished Frenchmen would imagine every fire-ship to be a floating mine, and, instead of trying to board them and divert them from their fleet, would be simply anxious to get out of their way with the utmost possible despatch.

The French, meanwhile, having watched their enemy lying inert for weeks, and confident in the gigantic boom which acted as their shield to the front, and the show of batteries which kept guard over them on either flank and to the rear, awaited the coming attack in a spirit of half-contemptuous gaiety. They had struck their topmasts and unbent their sails, and, by way of challenge, dressed their fleet with flags.

One ship, the *Calcutta*, had been captured from the British, and by way of special insult they hung out the British ensign under that ship's quarter gallery, an affront whose deadly quality only a sailor can understand.

The night of the 9th set in stormily. The tide ran fast, and the skies were black and the sea heavy—so heavy, indeed, that the boats of the English fleet, which were intended to follow and cover the fire-ships, never left the side of the flagship. Cochrane, however, had called the officers commanding the fire-ships on board his frigate, given them their last instructions, and at half-past eight p.m. he himself, accompanied only by a lieutenant and four sailors, cut the moorings of the chief explosion vessel and drifted off towards the French fleet.

Seated on top of 1,500 barrels of gunpowder and a sort of haystack of grenades, he calmly floated off, with a squadron of fire-ships behind him, towards the French fleet, backed by great shore batteries, with seventy-three armed boats as a line of skirmishers. "It seemed to me," says Marryat, who was an actor in the scene, "like entering the gates of hell!"

The great floating mine drifted on through blackness and storm till, just as it struck the boom, Cochrane, who previously made his five assistants get into the boat, with his own hand lit the fuse, and in turn jumped into the boat.

How frantically the little crew pulled together to get clear of the ignited mine may be imagined. But wind and sea were against them. The fuse, which was calculated to burn for twelve minutes, lasted for only five. Then the fifteen hundred barrels of gunpowder went off simultaneously, peopling the black sky with a flaming torrent of shells, grenades, and rockets, and raising a mountainous wave that nearly swamped the unfortunate boat and its crew.

The fault of the fuse, however, saved the lives of the daring six, as the missiles from the exploding vessel fell far outside them.

"The effect," says Cochrane, who, like Cæsar, could write history as well as make it, "constituted one of the grandest artificial spectacles imaginable. For a moment the sky was red with the lurid glare arising from the simultaneous ignition of 1,500 barrels of powder. On this gigantic flash subsiding the air seemed alive with shells, grenades, rockets, and masses of timber—the wreck of the shattered vessel." Then came blackness, punctuated in flame by the explosion of the next floating mine. Then, through sea-wreck and night, came the squadron of fire-ships, each one a pyramid of kindling flame! But the first explosion had achieved all that Cochrane expected. It dismissed the huge boom into chips, and the French fleet lay open to attack.

The captain of the second explosion vessel was so determined to do his work effectually, that the entire crew was actually blown out of the vessel and one member of the party killed, while the toil of the boats in which, after the fire-ships had been abandoned,

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they and their crews had to fight their way back in the teeth of the gale, was so severe that several men died of mere fatigue. The physical effects of the floating mines and the drifting fire-ships, as a matter of fact, were not very great. The boom, indeed, was destroyed, but out of twenty fire-ships only four actually reached the enemy's position, and not one did any damage.

Cochrane's explosion vessels, however, were addressed not so much to the French ships as to the alarmed imagination of French sailors, and the effect achieved was overwhelming. All the French ships save one cut or slipped their cables, and ran ashore in wild confusion.

The fifteen hundred barrels of gunpowder went off simultaneously.

Cochrane cut the moorings of his explosion vessel at half-past eight o'clock; by midnight—or in less than four hours—the boom had been destroyed, and thirteen French ships—the solitary fleet that remained to France—were lying helplessly ashore. Never, perhaps, was a result so great achieved in a time so brief, in a fashion so dramatic, or with a loss so trifling.

When the grey morning broke, with the exception of two vessels, the whole French fleet was found helplessly aground on the Palles shoal. Some were found on their bilge with the keel exposed, others were frantically casting their guns overboard and trying to get afloat again. Meanwhile Gambier and the British fleet were lying fourteen miles distant in the Basque roads, and Cochrane in the *Impérieuse* was watching, with powder-blackened face, the curious spectacle of the entire fleet he had driven ashore, and the yet more amazing spectacle of a British fleet declining to come in and finally destroy its enemy.

For here comes a chapter in the story on which Englishmen do not love to dwell. Cochrane tried to whip the muddy-spirited Gambier into enterprise by emphatic and quick-following signal. At six a.m. he signalled: "All the enemy's ships except two are on shore," but this extracted from drowsy Gambier no

other response than the answering pennant. Cochrane repeated his impatient signals at half-hour intervals, and with emphasis ever more marked: "The enemy's ships can be destroyed," "Half the fleet can destroy the enemy," "The frigates alone can destroy the enemy," but still no response save the indifferent pennant.

As the tide flowed in the French ships showed signs of getting afloat, and Cochrane signalled: "The enemy is preparing to heave off." Even this brought no response from the pensive Gambier. At eleven o'clock the British fleet weighed and stood in, but then, to Cochrane's speechless wrath, re anchored at a distance of three and a half miles, and by this time two of the French three-deckers were afloat.

Gambier finally despatched a single mortar vessel to bombard the stranded ships, but by this time Cochrane had become desperate. He adopted a device which recalls Nelson's use of his blind eye at Copenhagen. At one o'clock he hove his anchor atrip and drifted, stern foremost, towards the enemy. He dare not make sail lest his trick should be detected, and a signal of recall hoisted on the flagship.

Cochrane coolly determined, in a word, to force the hand of his sluggish Admiral. He drifted with his solitary frigate down to the hostile fleet and batteries, which Gambier thought it scarcely safe to attack with eleven ships of the line. When near the enemy's position he suddenly made sail and ran up the signal: "In want of assistance;" next followed a yet more peremptory message: "In distress."

Even Gambier could not see an English frigate destroyed under the very guns of an English fleet without moving to its help, and he sent some of his ships in. But meanwhile, Cochrane, though technically "in distress," was enjoying what he must have felt to be a singularly good time. He calmly took up a position which enabled him to engage an eighty-gun ship, one of twenty-four guns, and in particular that French ship which, on the previous day, had hung the British flag under her quarter gallery.

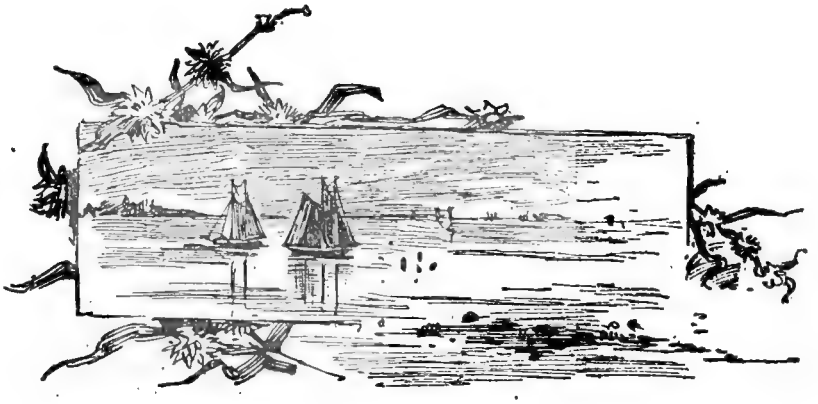
For half-an-hour he fought these three ships single-handed, and the *Calcutta* actually struck to him, its captain afterwards being court-martialed and shot by the French themselves for surrendering to a frigate. Then the other British ships came up, and ship after ship of the French fleet struck or was destroyed. Night fell before the work was completed, and during the night Gambier, for some mysterious reason, recalled his ships; but Cochrane in the *Impérieuse* clung to his post.

He persuaded Captain Seymour in the *Pallas* to remain with him, with four brigs, and with this tiny force he proposed to attack *L'Océan*, the French flagship of 120 guns, which had just got afloat; but Gambier peremptorily recalled him at dawn, before the fight was renewed. Never before or since was a victory so complete and so nearly bloodless. Five seamen were killed in the fire-ships, and five in the attack on the French fleet, and about twenty wounded; and with this microscopic "butcher's bill," a great fleet, the last naval hope of France, was practically destroyed. For so much does the genius and daring of a single man count!

That the French fleet was not utterly destroyed was due solely to Gambier's want of resolution. And yet such is the irony of history, that of the two chief actors in this drama Gambier, who marred it, was rewarded with the thanks of Parliament; Cochrane, who gave to it all its unique splendour, had his professional career abruptly terminated!

That wild night in the Aix roads, and the solitary and daring attack on the French fleet which followed next day, were practically Cochrane's last acts as a British sailor. He achieved dazzling exploits under the flag of Chili and Brazil; but the most original warlike genius the English navy has ever known fought no more battles for England.

("*The Man Who Spoilt Napoleon's Destiny*" *next week.*)



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AN EPISODE OF LIFE

SUMMARY.

Roy Arbuthnot is in love with Nelly, a beautiful girl beneath him in the social scale. His father, Sir Richard Arbuthnot, an impecunious baronet, wishes him to marry his cousin, Mary Arbuthnot, an heiress, to retrieve the family fortune.

The story opens with the parting scene between Roy and Nelly, which affects him to such an extent that he resolves he will not give her up, whatever the consequences, but being urged to do so by his friend, Jack Sinclair, and again by his father, he finally yields.

CHAPTER III.

The Alternative.

A marriage has been arranged, and will shortly be solemnised, between Roy, son and heir of Sir Richard Arbuthnot, Baronet, of Hatfield, and Mary, only daughter of the late John Arbuthnot, Esquire.

The paper dropped from Nelly's grasp, her face had grown white and drawn. But a few minutes ago and she had listlessly turned the pages and skipped the paragraphs, dipping here and there where a headline caught her notice, waiting for Roy. Surely he would be with her soon, they had so many plans for the future to discuss, and he had not been near the house all yesterday. She had been surprised, pained even, after their tender parting, but she had made excuses, had told herself that he was worried, was making arrangements, still she had not doubted. Had he not sworn?

And now this cold, cruel, stereotyped notice stunned her. For a time her brain whirled in confusion, she could not realise what had happened, it was too sudden. Gradually the power to think returned; all too quickly the knowledge that she was abandoned rushed to her. Her senses reeled under the blow, but with intense pain came consciousness.

The numb sensation disappeared before the acute agony of lucid thought. The cruelty, the heartless manner of it, the giving this notice to the world whilst she had been left in ignorance; could Roy have been guilty of that?

She would not believe it. It was so mean, despicable, so unlike him, she told herself. White to the lips, trembling in every limb, she stooped to pick up the paper. Faint and dizzy, she nearly fell, but, steadying herself by the back of a great easy-chair, which had been Roy's favourite lounge, she tried once more to read the announcement.

The lines seemed blurred and misty, surely the type was faint. By an effort of concentration she conquered her weakness, the letters were clear cut, there could be no mistake. Sinking back into the depths of the chair, she broke into hysterical sobbing which caught in the throat, which had no relief in tears.

It was finished—her dream was ended. She might have forgiven, but the manner of the parting made her writhe with pain.

Steps crunched upon the gravel outside the window, quick, heavy steps, which she knew, almost without thought, were those of the postman. In moments of intense strain perceptions come quickly, and before he had reached the door and had rung his double knock, she knew somehow he brought news from Roy. With no surprise, then, she received from her maid a letter addressed in the well-known hand.

"You look ill, m'm; can I get you anything?"

"Nothing, Frances, I have a headache. Leave me, please," Nelly answered wearily.

And Frances confided to Thomas very shortly afterwards that, "If the goods in this 'ere shop wasn't to be sold at a sacrifice before long, she hadn't cut her eye teeth."

Which remark showed Miss Frances to be a young woman of some discernment.

Nelly opened the letter with feverish haste. As she expected, it was from Roy. He wrote how he dare not meet her to tell the news—sad, killing news to him—that they must part.

His father had put it so that he could not refuse. It was ruin with her. For his mother's sake—in extenuation he used his mother's name—they must not meet again. He dare not, he could not, face the pain of parting. He would do all he could for her. She was, and would be dear to him always. No woman could hold in his heart the place she held, and, in spite of all, would hold. It was, so far as a selfish man can write a manly letter, an honest admission of

Steadying herself by the back of a great easy-chair.

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wrong-doing, and, strange as it may sound, it distinctly comforted her. The value lay in the last sentence:

"In a few days the world will learn that I am to marry my cousin. You know I have no choice, but you must hear before anyone else. Forget me, Nelly, and, if you can, forgive."

Roy, then, had not put this notice in the paper. Doubtless his father, fearful that Roy would change his mind at the eleventh hour, had fixed him so. Nelly, in all her grief, breathed a sigh of relief. He was not so callous, not so heartless as it had seemed. Again she read the letter, now more steadily, eagerly devouring the expressions of his love. Though she realised that he was lost to her, it was gratifying to know that he was unhappy. He suffered and she could not attempt to deny it gave her pleasure.

Her mortification was too acute to allow her to generalise. In calmer moments she would have moralised at the expense of others. She would have declared glibly enough that misfortune spread over numbers affects no one in particular, that the general burden so divided is easier to bear. She had not reached that stage, it would come later. Must she reply? Did his letter require answer? What could she say? She had implored him not to leave her, she had told him of her love, she had humbled herself, she had flung herself upon his mercy, she had pleaded, and this was the result.

A neatly-gloved hand stretched out.

Like a flash of light the question sprang unbidden to her lips. Was he worth it? Was he not utterly selfish? She had excused him but a few minutes ago, and pride which came to her aid told her plainly she had been foolish. She was not a slave, she had not sold herself body and soul to this man. The colour returned to her cheeks, her eyes flashed with anger. She passed from one extreme to the other. She would show him and his world she did not care. As the thought was framed she gasped with pain. She did care, but no one should know it. The past life was gone, ended; what of the future?

A summer storm beat upon the window and mimicked petulantly the tumult of her thoughts. Nelly, with face pressed against the glass, bitterly noted the similarity, the mockery. The elements were at war, she would war with the world. No pity had been her lot, no pity would she show. She would fight for her own hand, unaided, alone; she would fight and win. No more of love, no more tenderness. Never again should love warp her judgment. That hollow sham was gone, a pleasant dream whilst it had lasted, but with a rude awakening.

What was to be the next step? She would neither see nor write to Roy again. He should be blotted from her being. So far certain, but then?

As if in answer to the question, at that moment the garden gate was violently pushed open, and Charley Duff, under an umbrella which dripped rain from all its points, hastily approached the door.

"Kismet, it is Kismet," said Nelly bitterly. "I am answered."

CHAPTER IV.

After Many Days.

It was a dreary, sunless autumn day. A drizzling rain fell which soaked through wraps and cloaks and seemed in sheer malice to turn upwards under umbrellas to wet faces.

A day upon which pessimism was natural, and it was in no cheerful mood that Jack Sinclair made his way to the boat at Calais. He had been travelling aimlessly from place to place for months past. With no fixed purpose he had wandered on, now dawdling here, and then rushing with express speed to far distant towns. He would, as in other years, have been a welcome guest at many a country house, and indeed he had intended to return weeks sooner, but somehow a spirit of unrest had possessed him, and it was not until this miserable day in early November that he had turned his steps homeward.

He had paced the deck moodily for some short time after the boat had started, his chin buried in the upturned collar of an ulster, without taking note of other passengers, when as he passed a chair placed under the shelter of the paddle-box, a musical voice called to him: "Mr. Sinclair, Jack."

He turned hastily to see a figure huddled up in a large cloak and under a dripping umbrella. A neatly-gloved hand stretched out, and he was asked plaintively: "Don't you know me?"

"Nelly!" he exclaimed. "This is indeed a surprise. Are you alone? Are you not wet? Where are you going to?"

"What a string of questions! I am alone. I am not wet, and I am on my way to town. And you? But sit down, unless you are cold. Under the lee of this paddle-box you will get no more wet, anyway, than in walking the deck. I am sadly in need of a talk, Jack. You don't mind me calling you Jack, do you? You were always a friend to me. I know who looked after the sale of the house and things after Roy left me, and your letters, as Roy's friend, were so kind. I am delighted to have an opportunity of thanking you. But tell me, how is Roy? He is married, of course?"

"Yes; but I have not seen him since. I went abroad directly afterwards, and am only now returning."

"But you have heard from him?"

"Oh, yes; he and I are old chums, as you know. Still, men are bad correspondents, and his letters, and mine, have been few. I think I have had two from him."

"Tell me, is he well and—happy?"

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"He was well enough when I heard last, and, I suppose, happy. He did not say; he would not be likely to. But, Nelly——"

"Yes, yes, I know," she interrupted quickly; "you mean that I had better not ask. He is married—has passed out of my life. I should forget. I cannot, Jack; it is no use. Do not tease me; the day is too unspeakably wretched—my nerves are all wrong. Tell me all you know about him, or I shall cry."

"Don't do that, for goodness' sake!"

"No, no; I won't, really. You need not fear a scene; but tell me."

So he told all he knew—which was not much.

How Roy, after the honeymoon, had gone to the country, had taken a house near to the family seat, and was determined to study economy, and to fulfil what he had in bitterness called his mission. How he progressed he could not say, for he had not heard from Roy for many weeks.

"It is not much, as you say," Nelly remarked as he ended. "I would like so to hear from him."

"No, Nelly, don't. Keep away. No good can come of that. In kindness forget."

"Manlike, you do not think of me."

"Yes, I do, but I see trouble ahead if you meet. For your sake as well as his, banish him from your thoughts."

"It is impossible!"

He did not answer. What could he say?

The rain beat down mercilessly. Big drops splashed without cessation upon the sodden deck. The speed at which the fast boat ploughed its way through the grey water slanted the rain upon them, and made an umbrella but a poor protection.

Nelly shivered and huddled closer within her wraps, but she would not go below. There was a sufficient roll to make her feel that the stuffy cabin with a varied assortment of suffering humanity would complete her misery. It was bad enough on deck, but below—she shuddered.

"No," she said, "I will remain here." And then hurriedly, as if this were on her mind, and she must unburden: "You know Charley Duff is dead? Somehow I thought you would know; he was never strong, poor boy, and in the Mediterranean contracted a wasting fever which seemed to beat his strength at every turn. One day he would rally, only to sink again the next. He fought hard for life, and sometimes I thought—but the end came.

"Three bad days of delirium and raging fever, and then collapse. He was quite sensible to the last, he simply sank from exhaustion. His mother arrived in time—just in time. He must have told her how I had nursed him, and I did do my best, Jack—for she was really kind to me. She said no nasty things, but rather thanked me for all I had done for Charley. I think if she had acted the part of the virtuous mother and flung scorn at my head, I should have drowned myself, but she did not. Of course I only saw her once or twice by his bedside, and he would have me there, but after the funeral she sent kindly messages and offered help. Fancy a mother who doted upon her son never once saying that I was the cause of his death. I shall never forget her consideration."

"Poor Charley. I am sorry to hear of this. He never was strong, though he had plenty of pluck."

"Pluck! To use his own phrase, he spurted too soon in the race and could not last the distance."

"And you, Nelly, now?"

"I do not know. I am a waif and stray. I did not know it until weeks afterwards, but he left me £300 a year for life. I tell you, Jack, when I think of that, I feel, oh! so cheap. I think sometimes I wish we had never met; he might be alive now. Then again, I know he could not have lived long. He had gone the pace, indeed, and his was not the constitution to bear the strain. And then I remember that I am at any rate removed from want, and hideously selfish thoughts come unbidden. Sometimes I think I am utterly callous, dead to all emotions, thinking solely of self."

"No, no, Nelly. Not so. I never did think so."

Which was not strictly true, as Sinclair knew, remembering his talk with Roy at White's. But he was learning to see this woman in another light. He was now inclined to separate her from the class of which he knew something. She was not the mercenary courtesan who would desert the rich for the richer; she had finer feelings, higher emotions, even aspirations. Seldom is a woman all bad, or, for the matter of that, all good. So he told himself, and recognised that here the good more than balanced the bad. Perhaps he was inclined to make allowance easily, as most men are when pretty women are in question. At any rate, he persuaded himself that to befriend her was now his part.

"I am glad, Nelly, that you are left with, at any rate, bread and-butter. The position is not so cruel."

"But I must do something. I want work. I must have an object in life. So far I have drifted with the stream, but I near the rapids, and to have a chance must grip the helm firmly. But what can I do? That usual refuge the stage? I can sing. I think I can act. Heavens! have I not acted lately a part I was not cast for? Feigning love until almost—but no, I could not forget Roy."

"Roy, always Roy. Put him away, Nelly. It would mean ruin to him, think——"

"Yes," she interrupted quickly, with a pathetic catch in her voice more eloquent than many words. "Yes, I fear, I know, you are right, but——"

"Promise me you will avoid him, for Mary's sake—his wife—a woman I respect highly and—pity—promise, and I will try to find you something to do. Something to distract your thoughts, to give you a life to live. Something, I don't now know what, but I will think it over. I have many friends in the artistic world, and probably it could be arranged."

"You ask me a hard thing, Jack."

"Promise," he said shortly.

And after a pause, whilst she looked frowningly at the dull waves which rolled by with unbroken crests, she said sadly: "Yes, I promise; you are right." Her face was drawn and haggard. He saw that to so decide was not what she had intended, she had had other views, had possibly thought out for herself another future, perhaps herself before the footlights, but Roy, always Roy, ready to take his cue. He clinched it at once.

"That's right. Now I help. But here we are nearing Dover. May I see after your luggage, get you a seat and so on? There won't be a crush, but, if you will let me, I will travel with you, and we can talk things over on the way up."

On arrival in town, Sinclair, having seen Nelly into a hansom, went to White's to dine.

As he entered, he met Roy Arbuthnot face to face; there was no chance of avoiding him, or at that moment he would gladly have done so. He was not good at lying, and he knew instinctively that he would be questioned about Nelly. Whether he had seen or heard of her, of her doings, and he knew he could not bluntly say he knew nothing. There he was, and he must face the music.

Roy's greeting was effusive. "Jack! old man, of all men the one I have longed to see. How are you? Come and dine with us. Mary and I are in town for a few days. She says she positively must have some new frocks. I don't understand, but suppose it is all right. We are staying at the Métrôpole. You will come, won't you? That's all right. You can get a room there. Now, do not disappoint me," as Sinclair hesitated.

"I am with you, Roy. I'll leave my traps here for the present. My rooms are ready, I wired my man that I was coming.'

He had known Roy's wife for years, and called her Mary with the familiarity of an old friend. She was glad to see

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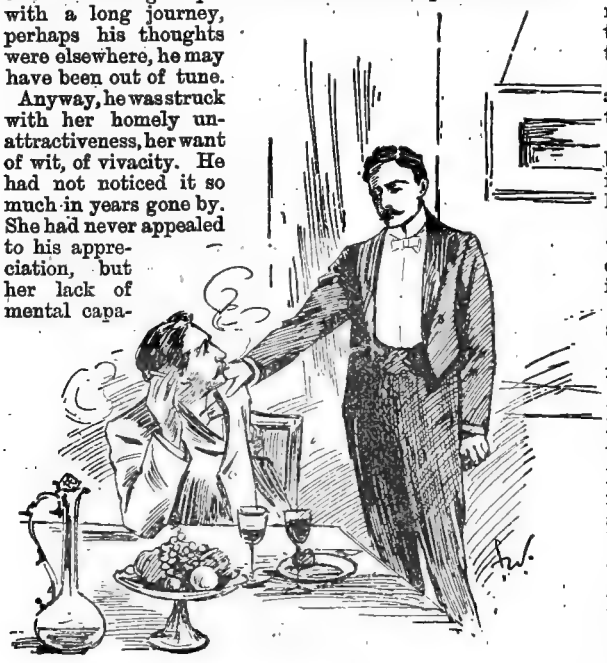
him and chatted of old times and doings when they were all children together. She questioned him about his travels, his long absence from home, and heavily, yes, it must be confessed, heavily chaffed him about the grief his desertion of familiar haunts had caused to admirers.

Indeed, Sinclair was distinctly bored. Hers was the sort of chaff which got upon his nerves. Perhaps he was tired with a long journey, perhaps his thoughts were elsewhere, he may have been out of tune.



Placed his hand on Sinclair's shoul'd:r.

Anyway, he was struck with her homely unattractiveness, her want of wit, of vivacity. He had not noticed it so much in years gone by. She had never appealed to his appreciation, but her lack of mental capacity to-night irritated. She chatted freely enough, but of the commonplace events of their life in the country which had no interest for him, and she seemed incapable of extended ideas.

He pictured the wife suitable to Roy, a man of sensitive, highly-strung temperament, and unwillingly he drew comparisons between what he had as a helpmeet and what he should have had. Here was Roy married to a woman, an estimable woman in many ways, but how unfitted to him! He noticed how now and again a tired look crept over his face, how it was only by an effort he joined in the conversation, and how from time to time he tried to lead her to general topics, with, however, indifferent success.

Mary was so evidently contented with her position as the newly-married woman, the future Lady Arbuthnot, taking her stand in the county amongst people she had not previously known, that their doings, their sayings, were an engrossing subject to her.

Sinclair did not like the outlook. She would not be able to keep Roy by her side. He felt that, and wished her mind's view could cover a wider field. He had time to reflect, as she wandered on, that women of her type develop in middle age into excellent, if somewhat over-anxious, mothers, into, perhaps, fussy patrons of local charities, village schools, and the junior clergy. He could see Mary inclosing her life with a fence, and living within it with no longing for the world beyond, and but little sympathy with its doings.

It would be a high fence, and the area surrounded would be small, so small that he feared Roy would wander afield. Already he thought he saw indifference, want of interest. He had an uncomfortable feeling that something was wrong, and he said to himself again he did not like the outlook.

Mary was a handsome woman, now at her best. She would probably, in still young life, grow stout and heavy, become the middle-aged, unattractive matron before her time.

Her deep, musical voice, clear as a bell, would, however, remain. It reminded him of Nelly continually, and several times he caught himself listening to its tones rather than to the words.

At length Mary left the room to prepare for the theatre, and the two friends, lighting cigarettes, pulled their chairs to the table again.

There was an awkward silence which Sinclair hesitated to break. He realised that one thought, one remembrance was in Roy's mind, and he knew also the question to expect, but he would give no lead.

Roy sat with bent brows, drumming upon the table with a knife balanced between his fingers, not heeding the cigarette which smoked in spiral rings from the plate where it lay.

Suddenly he looked up and asked quickly: "Have you seen Nelly?"

"My dear Roy, don't you begin about her. You are married, she is gone, that book should be closed."

"For Heaven's sake don't preach, Jack. I must know. Every time Mary speaks she reminds me of Nelly. Her voice tells me every minute of the day what a cad I have been. I left her to marry a woman I don't love, oh, yes! I know, common decency should stop me. I cannot hide it from you. I loved Nelly, I love her now. I can never love another woman. Mary's voice keeps her before me always. I shut my eyes and I hear Nelly, always Nelly. I open them and see—Mary."

"You are a fool, Roy. You are infatuated. You forget Duff."

"He is dead. I heard it yesterday, and you know it, I see you do. And you tried to deceive me. You know where Nelly is, you have seen her. Don't say you have not, I won't believe you." And in his excitement he sprang to his feet and shouted across the table to Sinclair, "tell me, I say."

"Arbuthnot, you are mad," answered Sinclair, controlling his temper by an effort.

"Tell me," again Arbuthnot said hotly. Then he rapidly crossed the room and placed his hand on Sinclair's shoulder as he said in lower tones: "Forgive me, Jack, I was mad, I am mad. I cannot bear this tension. I must see Nelly if only for a few minutes, just to explain, just to tell her I am not the heartless brute she must think me. Tell me her address, Jack," he almost pleaded.

She had in surprise paused at the door.

"I will not," Sinclair answered shortly. "It would be suicidal for you to see her, ruin to both of you."

"Then she has asked of me. She does not forget. I knew she was true whilst I was false.

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When did you see her, Jack? Tell me that, anyway. I am in a fever. I am a brute, I know, but let it pass. Quick! Mary will be down directly. Is she well? How did she look? What is she going to do? Go on, man alive, go on."

"She is well—but, Roy, do drop this. Think, think what it means—ruin——"

"Ruin; what do I care about ruin? I have married to

It was with wondering thoughts that she took her seat.

save the father, if I efface myself how does that concern anyone?"

"Mary?"

Roy laughed bitterly. "Oh, Mary, yes, of course I will—I must—remember her. There shall be no scandal. I only want to see Nelly to explain—to bid her good-bye. Tell me the address, Jack. Quick, man, she may be here any minute."

"I tell you again I will not. You are mad."

"You will not?" and Arbuthnot, with a face white with passion, confronted him.

"No."

The two men stood facing each other, drawn to full height, with flashing eyes and clenched fists as the door opened and Mary appeared enveloped in a cloak ready to start.

She stood there for a moment with startled eyes, with paled cheeks, looking from one to the other. Hearing voices raised in anger, she had in surprise paused at the door. She had heard the word "Nelly," and her husband had passionately asked for an address.

Who Nelly might be and what the reason for this heat she could not guess. She had no time to think, as the door swung open and they turned smilingly to her with commonplace remarks and passed down the stairs to the carriage. Perhaps they over-acted a little, and she noted the restraint.

It was with wondering thoughts that she took her seat, and through the play, Nelly, Nelly rang through her brain.

"I will find her without you," whispered Roy sharply, as they left Sinclair on the pavement.

(To be continued.)

£240 IN PRIZES.

£100 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in PEARSON'S WEEKLY as follows:*

1st PRIZE - Fifty Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE - A Ten-Pound Bank of England Note.
3rd, 4th, and 5th PRIZES - Five-Pound Bank of England Notes.
6th to 20th PRIZES - Fifteen Sovereigns.
21st to 40th PRIZES - Twenty Half-Sovereigns.

The sketches, of which the first ten appear in **Pearson's Weekly** dated April 3rd, represent the titles of popular novels. There will be thirty pictures in all, and the prizes will go to those who correctly solve the greatest number.

£50 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in HOME NOTES as follows:*

1st PRIZE - Twenty Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE - A Ten-Pound Bank of England Note.
3rd PRIZE - A Five-Pound Bank of England Note.
4th to 13th PRIZES - Ten Sovereigns.
14th to 23rd PRIZES - Ten Half-Sovereigns.

The sketches, of which the first ten appear in **Home Notes** dated April 10th, represent the Christian names of men and women, and the prizes will go to those who correctly solve the greatest number.

£40 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in THE SUNDAY READER, as follows:*

1st PRIZE - Ten Pounds in Gold.
2nd PRIZE - A Five-Pound Bank of England Note.
3rd PRIZE - One Sovereign.
4th to 9th PRIZES - Five Half-Sovereigns.
And One Hundred Magnificent Five Shilling Books.

The sketches, the first ten of which appear in the number dated February 27th, represent the names of Biblical characters, and the prizes will go to those who correctly solve the greatest number.

£50 *is offered in connection with the PICTURE PUZZLES in SHORT STORIES.*

Full Particulars Appear on Page 427.

START AT ONCE.

THERE IS MONEY IN IT.

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The Air Squadron.

"Have another cigar, lieutenant," I said, pushing the box across the table towards him.

"No, thank you," he replied. "But, with your permission, I'll fill my pipe from your jar. Indeed, when I came up to your room, it was only for a little tobacco—ran out myself—cigars all gone. And here it is already twelve o'clock. My, my, how time flies when one gets reminiscencing! But, to continue."

Now, when my good friend Lieutenant Swash takes possession of me and my room at eleven p.m. I do not always consider it my duty to listen to him. He has been such a frequent visitor of mine since he has been staying at our boarding-house, and then he is one of those individuals who so lose themselves in their own narrations, that they even forget they have an audience. So, when the lieutenant said: "But, to continue," I sank deeper into my big chair and gazed absently into the fire.

He was talking warfare of the future. What cared I for that, who possessed neither stocks that would go down nor food products that would go up? My eyelids closed wearily. How I wished he would go! Then he made a statement so absurd that I laughed.

"It took place on July 16th, 1946," I heard him say.

"Eighteen forty-six," I corrected.

"Now, look here," said the naval man testily. "How old do you think I am—80? Pshaw! I was thirty then. It was 1946, and please don't contradict me. It was fifty years hence it all happened."

"If you will have it so, very well," I said.

"Now the date is settled, and you thoroughly understand the cause of the war. Great Britain claimed the atmospheric covering of the earth to a height of 10,000 feet, basing the claim on the fact that as far back as 1899 an English balloonist had disappeared from view at that height. He was never seen again. Such a claim as this, had it been recognised by other nations, would have given her too great a control over mankind's supply of breath. France claimed up to an altitude of 1,000 feet over their country, but Great Britain would not recognise this, and refused to arbitrate. The result was war—terrible war."

I took my pipe from between my teeth, and fixed a cold eye on the speaker, who went on calmly:

"You will remember that it was July 16th, 1946, that the fight occurred. There were three battleships in our fleet—Admiral Wad's flagship, the *Swallow*, carrying fifteen tons of dynamite and two machine-guns; the *Lightning*, Captain Blower, ten tons of dynamite, and two 6-inch rifles; the *Hawk*, Captain Wood, eleven tons of dynamite, and a pneumatic gun, used in throwing explosives at the enemy in case she got above us.

"We were accompanied by two small torpedo-boats and the swift unarmoured cruiser *Kalamazoo*, which we expected to be of little service, since a bullet could have punctured her and sent her to earth for ever.

"We lay in mid-channel for four days awaiting the approach of the enemy's flying squadron. It was ten o'clock on the morning of July 16th when we sighted them, about 200 miles away, running towards us at a rapid rate. They must have seen us at about the same time, for they sheered off a little towards the north and began to rise.

"Admiral Wad, at whose side I was standing on the quarter-deck of the *Swallow*, at once understood their manœuvre. In modern warfare it's the fellow who gets above the other and drops dynamite on him that wins.

"We were then at an altitude of about 8,000 feet, and did not lose any time getting higher. I can see the grand old admiral now as he stood at the switch-board, coolly puffing his cigar as if he were at his club in London. There was not a tremour observed on his long thin finger as he pushed the button marked 'Up.' Then we began to ascend.

"The other two battleships followed, and as we rose we cleared for action. The *Kalamazoo* and the torpedo-boats were left behind, as it was not deemed advisable to expose their frail structures to the enemy's fire.

"I confess, as I stood beside my brave leader and felt our ship mounting higher and higher and shooting on towards the enemy at a speed of ninety miles an hour, watched the crew of ten men coolly placing dynamite bombs in the most convenient places, saw the three great steel balloons of our enemy's squadron glistening in the sunlight as they shot towards us, I felt that strange inward sensation that heretofore I believed could only be caused by a Welsh rarebit at 2 a.m.

"I was in full possession of my mental faculties. Otherwise I should never have been able to have lived through those awful two hours. And the crew, too—I never saw a braver set of fellows in my life. Not a moist eye or a trembling lip amongst them.

"The enemy had two first-class battleships and two second-class. They advanced in a line parallel to ours.

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Admiral Wad signalled Captain Blower to engage the two second-class ships on the left, the *Hawk* to take the right, leaving us the flagship in the centre.

"This vessel, I saw through my glasses, was a little larger than, but of almost the same construction as, the *Swallow*. There was a great cylindrical balloon of steel, fully 800 feet in length, with the car swung beneath it, an armed turret, fore and aft, protecting her guns, at her stern a great propeller fan and two huge rudders for steering. I saw her crew running two and fro, getting in readiness for the conflict; her commander, with a little knot of officers about him, standing forward, eagerly scanning our fleet.

"Higher and higher we rose, the air rapidly getting more and more rare, and our breathing becoming more and more rapid. I looked down at the sea, which was glimmering 15,000ft. below us in the sunlight. I turned my eyes at the great cylinder over head. Shot holes in two of its air-tight compartments, and what a fall! But there were other things to think of.

"'Admiral,' I gasped, 'if we go much higher, we shall die for want of air.'

"'Mr. Swash,' replied the grand old salt, 'duty before breath always—remember that, sir. I'm afraid the ship will not carry much higher. We'll get over them, don't you think, Captain Howitzer?'

"Howitzer gazed anxiously at the enemy, who were now within fifteen miles, and replied:

"'Close call, sir.'

"Then to the men:

"'Stand ready to drop a ton of dynamite on them if we get over them!'

"As he spoke there was a puff on the enemy's flagship, and a solid shot came singing half a mile below us. Old Wad laughed, and ordered the bow gun to return the fire when we were within five miles. Our shells passed over them. We had then reached as high an altitude as it was possible for the ships to float, and then we reduced speed. They approached to within two miles, and stopped and began to circle about us, evidently intending to subject our balloons to a cross fire. Higher than we they could not go, and the discovery of this fact brought jeers and cheers from our crew.

"For some fifteen minutes there was terrible suspense. Each vessel circled warily around its chosen opponent, banging away with its machine-guns in vain endeavour to puncture the enemy's balloon. But the distance was too great and the movements of the vessels too quick for any successful gun work. Suddenly Howitzer seized my arm and pointed towards the *Lightning*. Her crew had just thrown overboard her whole cabin, her two guns, and a great quantity of dynamite bombs.

"For a moment we were speechless with astonishment. Were they going to take to flight? Admiral Wad seized a flag and was about to signal, when he stopped. Slowly the great vessel was mounting in the air. A cry of dismay was heard from the hostile ship with which she was engaged. In five minutes she was 400 feet above them. The French crew madly threw overboard all the weight they carried—guns, bombs, and everything. But they were too late—the *Lightning* was above them. Then a black object dropped down upon them; a deafening roar followed, with a rush of wind that hurled the *Swallow* a mile out of her course. And when we looked towards the *Lightning* she was alone, but slowly sinking towards the sea, for the concussion had torn off the end of her balloon cylinder. We could see her crew at the rail cheering wildly.

"Admiral Wad at once ordered us to pursue the same tactics. Everything went by the board—guns and all ammunition but five bombs. We loosened some rivets in the floor and let the cabin fall; then we, too, began to rise. But the French Admiral was not to be outwitted, for he had been busy at exactly the same work, and when we found ourselves 1,000ft. higher, he lay a mile away at the same altitude.

"Admiral Wad swore. Our guns were gone and we could have lain there for eternity and not harm each other, unless we closed. For a long time he paced the deck in silence. At length he called the men together, and in a neat, touching speech asked for one volunteer for a forlorn hope.

"'All that can be done,' he said, 'is to ram the enemy. One man and myself can handle the ship, and it would be useless for you to stop on board simply to lose your lives.'

"Every man volunteered; every man offered to stay in their commander's place. He chose me for his companion, since I alone of all the crew was unmarried, and he positively refused to accept a substitute. He would go down with the old ship, he said.

"The scene that followed was most touching. The men wrung the brave old man's hand in a last parting. One by one they took their parachutes, swung over the side and went sailing away into the blue.

"The last man was gone, and old Wad turned towards me and embraced me. Between his emotion and the extreme rarification of the air he could not speak. This show of feeling lasted but a minute, for we were brought to our senses by a great cheer from the enemy's crew. They believed the ship deserted, and were bearing down towards us.

"Instantly the Admiral straightened up and firmly pushed the button, turning the full force of the electrical current into the propelling motors. The great ship swung round, and, with terrific speed, sailed at the enemy. The enemy tried to swing their ship out of the course, but in vain. In a minute we struck them. A crash like a thousand peals of thunder, a flash like the explosion of a dynamite factory, and all was still. And when I looked again there was nothing but blue, the endless blue of infinite space. The *Hawk* and her two opponents had been wrecked, I suppose, by the awful concussion."

Lieutenant Swash had finished his narration, and for a long time puffed silently at his pipe. I, for my part, was wrapped in silent wonder at the man. I knew Swash well, but such assurance as this I had not believed him capable of.

After all, he was one of those persons who lie so habitually that, coming from them, a story of their own death was not surprising.

C. B. Luyère.

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A VERY UNEXPECTED DENOUEMENT.

Bill, by profession, was a burglar—hard-working, straightforward, skilful. With his partner it was different. Jim, by profession was a gentleman at large: "Jim-the-Gentleman." Frequently, however, he accompanied Bill on his excursions, while it was his brain that devised the plots and ruses by which he had become famous among his confederates.

Jim, in elegant attire, with a high, white collar, was reclining on a heap of straw in one corner of the room, puffing at a cigar. Bill was sitting huddled up on a three-legged stool, sucking a black clay pipe.

Suddenly he put his foot on the floor, and brought his hands down on his knees with a slap.

"Jim," he said, slowly and impressively. "Jim, funds is low."

"Funds *are* low," corrected Jim. "I do wish, my dear fellow, that you would learn to speak more grammatically."

"Funds are low," said Bill. "Hev you any idees for raising 'em?"

Jim leant back on the straw, half closed his eyes, and remained for a few minutes in deep thought.

"During the course of my afternoon stroll," he said at length, "I noticed a palatial residence in the vicinity of Clapham, set well back in fine-looking grounds. It occured to me that in this place we might find some funds."

"Who's the owner?" asked Bill.

"The owner is a retired merchant named Bankum."

"Any family?" enquired Bill.

"None. I also discovered that he dines at half-past six."

"Good," said Bill, rubbing his hands. "And goes to bed nice and early!"

"That I didn't trouble to enquire."

"Didn't you find out when he goes to bed? Oh, Jim, I'm ashamed of ye."

"If you will allow me to disclose my plan, perhaps you will be better able to criticise it," said Jim haughtily. "I propose that we visit this gentleman at about half-past seven."

"'Arf-past seven? Oh lor'!"

"We shall not, however, go in our present costume."

Jim pulled down his cuffs.

"I have in my bag the necessary paraphernalia."

Jim opened his bag, and drew out two new policeman's uniforms.

Bill stared at them in open-eyed amazement.

"This is for you," said Jim. "This, an inspector's, you will notice, for me. Now listen. At half-past seven we present ourselves at Mr. Bankum's residence. I find him sitting in his drawing-room. I tap him on the shoulder, and tell him that he must consider himself under arrest. He demands our warrant. I show it." Jim drew out a well-imitated warrant.

"He will storm and rave, of course, and fly into a temper. However, I will put you on guard, and tell you not to allow him to leave the room while I proceed to search the house. I will order all the servants into one room, and lock them in. Then I will take my sack, and proceed to examine the house, picking up anything that I may think useful. What do you say to that as a good idea? How will that raise the funds, eh, Bill, my boy?"

Bill was scratching his head. The idea had not yet quite sunk in.

"We start in an hour," said Jim. "In the meanwhile I have some letters to write, while you may be trying on your uniform." Saying which, he rose from his bed of straw, and, lighting a fresh cigar, strolled into the adjoining room.

Subdued roars of laughter came from Bill as he put himself into policeman's clothes.

An hour later the pair started off for the suburban residence of Mr. Bankum, at Clapham.

Precisely at half-past seven Jim rang the bell. The footman started back in amazement when he saw an inspector of police and a constable standing before him.

"I will inform Mr. Bankum of your presence," said the footman.

The drawing-room door was directly in front of the hall door. As the footman opened it, and delivered his message, the two visitors saw a curious sight. Mr. Bankum's face turned pale, fear shone from his eyes, a pen dropped from his hand to the floor. He half rose from his seat, and then sat down again, and mopped his brow..

"Show 'em in," he said. "Show 'em in. I'm—er—expecting them."

"What's up," whispered Bill.

"*He's expecting us*," said Jim. "Be prepared for a bolt," he whispered, as he was ushered into Mr. Bankum's presence.

"I am very sorry, sir," he said in his most polite manner, "to be under the painful necessity of putting you under arrest."

"Yes, yes," replied Mr. Bankum, "I quite understand. You come from Scotland Yard, eh?"

"Yes," said Jim.

A gasp came from Bill. His jaw dropped.

"What would happen, now," continued Mr. Bankum, trembling with nervousness, "if you were to go back to Scotland Yard, and say that I had gone? Left twenty-four hours before you came?"

Jim was silent for a moment. The question took him completely by surprise. Bill was gasping behind him.

"Nothing would happen," said Jim at length, "as far as we are concerned."

"Well, now, to come to the point," said Mr. Bankum, "what will you take to do it? A thousand for yourself, and five hundred for your man? How will that suit you, eh, Mr. Inspector?"

"Couldn't do it," said Jim promptly. "It's not worth the risk."

"Two for yourself, then—three—three thousand for yourself, and one for your man. On this condition," continued Mr. Bankum, when Jim nodded, and he counted out the notes, "you will inform Scotland Yard that I left twenty-four hours before you came?"

"Yes," said Jim.

"Good-night," said Mr. Bankum, and a moment later inspector and constable found themselves outside, gazing blankly into each other's eyes.

"Well," said Jim, completely taken off his guard, "I'm blowed."

"Whatever did he do it for?" whispered Bill.

They found out a few days later. Then all the world was startled by the news that Mr. Bankum, the well-known merchant, had absconded with an enormous amount of his firm's money.

"Now you understand," said Jim, as they discussed the affair over an oyster supper, "why Mr. Bankum was so generous."

But Bill was calling for champagne.

J. M. W.

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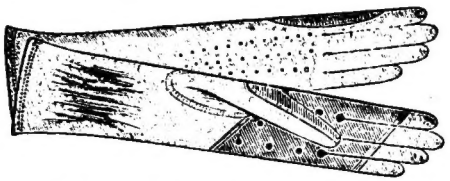
GLOVES.

MOST of our readers feel the essential need of being neatly gloved, and fortunately prices at the present day are now so moderate there are few of us who cannot afford this necessary finish to the toilet.

Quite recently I called at The London Glove Company's Warehouse, 45a, Cheapside, E.C., to inspect the novelties for the coming season, and I was really surprised at the remarkably low price for which an excellent and well-fitting pair of gloves may be here obtained. The variety at this well-known establishment is almost bewildering, and it would be impossible for me to describe the many styles of pointings and finish. For the benefit of our cycling friends, I must, however, draw attention to a smart Tan Doeskin glove, ventilated and tilburied, with leather palms, the price of which is only 2s. 4d. The illustration shows the style of glove I mean, and the same glove can be had in White Doeskin without the tilburied palms, at 1s. 11d. per pair.



A very complete and illustrated Price List has just been issued by The London Glove Company, and can now be forwarded post free to any address.

Those of our readers who conveniently can, should pay a visit either to the Warehouse, at 45a, Cheapside, E.C., or the branch establishment, 83, New Bond Street, W., where an infinite variety of novelties in Gloves, Hose, Handkerchiefs, and Fans are always displayed.

HAIR DESTROYED.

A doctor's widow knows of a simple, inexpensive remedy that permanently destroys the roots, and will forward particulars free to all those afflicted sending stamped envelope. — Address, Mrs. B. D. WOOD, 179, Westminster Bridge Road, London.

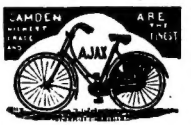
RED NOSES

Permanently cured in a few days by a simple, inexpensive self-treatment. Particulars free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to DR. A. M. CURTIS, York Chambers, Adelphi, London, W.C.

BLUSHING.

Particulars of a self-treatment for a permanent cure, as prescribed by eminent physicians of the U.S.A., forwarded free to all sufferers on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to Dr. B. F. FIELD, 15, York Buildings, Charing Cross, London, W.

Fully Guaranteed. Lists and Testimonials Post Free.



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A lady who in a few months reduced her weight from 16st. to 10st. 3lb. by a simple, inexpensive and harmless self-treatment, will willingly send free particulars of same to all who are sufferers, on receipt of stamped envelope. Address, Mrs. G. M. ELLIS, 26, Belvedere Road, Lambeth, London.

OUR EYES! OUR EARS!

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CURED WITHOUT OPERATION

NEW TREATMENT.—For Cataract and all Diseases of the Eye; Deafness in all its forms; Noises in the Head and Ears; Discharges from the Ears; Deafness from Influenza and Catarrh cured. Nine cases out of ten cured without personal interview. The special remedies forwarded to any part. Hundreds of letters in testimony. Bleeding, Blistering, and all other obsolete and violent treatment avoided. No "Ear-Drums," "Ear-Cornets," or painful instruments employed. Write for Testimonials and Printed Form of Questions to answer: forwarded free.—Mr. T. ISON, Eye and Ear Dispensary, Leeds. [Estab. 1871.]

£35 FOR YOU. £35

This money will be given to purchasers of the

CLARENCE SCENT SACHET

Who can solve the 34 Square.

Specially imported; useful and ornamental; handsomely tinted, from which emanates a beautiful odour, suffusing the whole household. Fifty different perfumes. No Lady or Gentleman should be without one. Price 1s. post free. Neatly packed and sent per return.

34	9	16	5	4	34
34					34
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DIRECTIONS.—The figures to be used are:

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Copy out on a sheet of paper a square with 16 divisions, as shown in diagram, then arrange the figures from 1 to 16 (using no same figure twice), in order to make a total of 34 on each of the four lines (as shown) from left to right, not top to bottom. Then send your order for **SCENT SACHET**, enclosing postal order or stamps for 1s., and stamped directed envelope for Prize Result, &c., to

MISS A. CLARENCE,
The Clarence Toilet Company,
6, Bridgwater Street, London, E.C.

N.B.—The £35 is given in order to further introduce the **CLARENCE SCENT SACHET**, which will be sent on receipt of order. Should there be more than one correct, the £35 will be divided, consequently, should you be correct, you are certain to be a prize winner. You will know whether you are correct within twenty-four hours. This competition closes on Saturday, May 1st, 1897. Prizes, results, &c., will be despatched on Monday, May 3rd, 1897.

£35 FOR YOU. £35

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Answers to Correspondents.

The attention of readers this week is directed to the Puzzle Picture Competition, the first ten pictures of which appear on page 427. As everybody is familiar with the names of certain Members of Parliament, or has the means of discovering or obtaining a complete list, there is no reason why you should not have a try to obtain at least a portion of that £50. Bear in mind the fact that even if you are unable to solve every one of the first ten, there are thousands of others who are in the same position as yourself. Do as many as you can with the assistance of your friends. You cannot do more.

J. F. T.—No, you cannot compel any of the Post Office authorities to lick your stamps for you. All they do is to supply you with a little moistening wad.

E. R.—A "morning session" in the House of Commons begins at two o'clock in the afternoon, and lasts till seven in the evening.

Recruit.—The standard of height is greater in the British Army than in that of any other nation.

N. W.—I believe that the most valuable modern painting is Meissonier's "1814," which was bought by a Frenchman a few years ago for £56,000.

L. B.—Rosewood is so called because when first cut it gives out a perfume like that of the rose. You are wrong in supposing that roses grow upon the tree which supplies it.

Briton.—The Boers are descended from the Huguenots, who left France under the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and from Dutch emigrants in search of civil and religious liberty.

K. L.—Toothache can generally be cured immediately by putting a small piece of cotton, saturated with strong ammonia, into the hollow of the affected tooth.

Singer.—No, wine taken in moderation will not injure your voice; beer, however, will tend to thicken it and make it guttural.

C. D. writes to ask me if I consider early rising conducive to long life.——This has been the general opinion until recent years. An authority on the subject now says that a man has so many hours to be awake, and the fewer of these he uses up each day, the longer he will live. The proper way to economise life, therefore, is to sleep every moment that it is not necessary or desirable that you should be awake.

W. S.—Previous to the year 1748 there was no regular uniform for sailors. In this year, however, the "blue-jacket" was adopted.

H. C.—You are wrong. A ruby of the best quality, and of more than three carats, is worth more than a diamond of the same size and weight.

T. H.—No, silver is not legal tender in Great Britain for amounts over forty shillings.

P. C.—The use of amber for the mouth-pieces of pipes originated in a belief of the Turks that amber is an infallible preventative of the injurious effects of nicotine.

D. F. G.—The largest lighthouse in the world belongs to Havre, in France.

H. N. has been insulted by a man who is considerably bigger than himself, and wants to know the best way to repudiate.——There are two courses open; one is to bear it with Christian fortitude, the other is to hire a bigger man to show him the error of his ways.

W. A. J.—I am sorry that I cannot entertain the idea of publishing your Military Band March.

B. B.—The largest flower in the world grows in Sumatra. It is called the Rafflesia Arnoldi, and some of the specimens are thirty-nine inches in diameter. The central cup will hold six quarts of water. The other portion of your letter will have the best consideration.

B. D.—A few of the lower order of creatures live without sleep. Many short-lived insects do so, and some species of fish, such as the pike, salmon, and goldfish.

T. F. L. wants to know if when eggs are sent through the post, and chickens are hatched on the way, whether the creatures become the property of the Post Office authorities, the sender, or the receiver.——If the eggs were paid for, I should say the receiver; any way, certainly not the Post Office people.

A. B. D.—Perhaps, on the whole, the Chinese are the longest lived people in the world.

C. H.—There are a thousand parcels lost every day on the British railways.

Esther—Fulness of the temples above the eyes is supposed to denote musical ability.

H. D. C.—Frogs are not eaten all the year round in France. Like oysters, they are only in season during the months that contain the letter "r."

Athlete wishes to know what winter pastime is most popular in Russia.——Skating is, perhaps, the favourite, and in the parks the ice soon becomes roughened by the runners of the skates. A large roller is brought on to the ice, which is heated so as to melt the surface sufficiently to make it smooth. This roller is pushed or pulled over the ice by three men.

H. K.—Yes, ink-bottles should always be corked when sent through the post.

D. H.—You may be surprised to hear that the mosaic pavement you admire so much in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral was made by the female convicts at Woking.

G. H.—The crown of England is worth £120,000.

S. B.—The person who speaks the purest English is the man or woman with regard to whom it is impossible to say from what part of the country he or she comes.

Instead of waiting for a policeman to tell you that your bicycle lamp ought to be alight, you need only consult the "Dot" lighting-up calendar—a tiny frame that may be fixed to any part of the machine, containing a number of cards on which is printed the information you require. The price is sixpence, and the patentees live at 55, Fisherton Street, Salisbury, and are named Smith.

Mr. G. Nicholls, of Weybridge, is the inventor of a novel device for pumping a continuous current of air into the tyres of a bicycle while the machine is being ridden. Underneath the saddle is a small pump, and the energy exerted by the elasticity of the saddle-spring is utilised in passing the air along the framework of the bicycle, and through a false spoke in each wheel. By this means it is possible for one to continue riding even with the tyre severely punctured.

Messrs. Thorn and Hoddle of 164, Camberwell New Road, London, S.E., are the inventors of the patent "Incanto" Acetylene gas-generator. By means of this contrivance anyone can, without any previous knowledge, be his own gas-fitter, gas-supplier, and consumer. The generator is sold in three sizes, and is to be bought at a price ranging from £3 10s. to £21. For photographers and magic-lanterns the invention is of especial value.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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DO YOU WANT A MACHINE GIVEN TO YOU?

We cannot quite do that, but we are clearing out our immense stock of best quality LOCKSTITCH SEWING MACHINES, full size, at 21/- each, as we require our storeroom for Diamond Jubilee goods. We have such immense orders for decorations and illuminations that we are devoting our time and space to these articles. All our large best sewing machines must be cleared at once, at enormous sacrifice. We possess over 1,000 testimonials. When people kindly take the trouble to sit down and write us a letter saying how delighted they are with our machines, it means they must be good, and you can have one of them for 21s. till we are sold out; then you can go to an ordinary machine agent, and pay him £3 3s. for one. Just kindly write us a post-card, saying: "Send me particulars of your sewing machines," and we will send you full illustrations and copies of testimonials. Only please send at once. We cannot let you have one for a guinea when we are sold out. It is a chance of a lifetime. We take back and change any machine not giving thorough satisfaction. A grand, full-size, splendid lockstitch sewing machine for 21s.! Look in the shop window in your town, and see what they ask you, and then send to us at once.

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LONGEST REIGN!
GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!
GRAND COMMEMORATION PARCELS

To Celebrate Her Majesty's Most Glorious Reign.

Special Value! Read the copy of the Letter of Thanks sent us by command of the Queen, which is enclosed in every package. Each parcel which we send out is bound to contain the following special articles:—A Portrait in colours of Her Majesty, mounted and framed complete; a book entitled: **"The Queen's Diamond Jubilee,"** describing the chief events in the life of Her Majesty, profusely illustrated; Engravings of the Queen as a Child, at the time of her Coronation, Coronation Ceremony, Visiting the Sick at Balmoral, Reviewing the Troops in Hyde Park, The Queen at Netley Hospital, Prince Albert, The Duke and Duchess of York, The Infant Duke, The Prince and Princess of Wales, Windsor Castle, Osborne House, Balmoral Castle, etc.; also the **SPECIAL ODE TO THE QUEEN, Composed by our Mr. J. D. Theobald in Commemoration of the 60th Year of Her Reign,** and a copy of which was graciously accepted by Her Majesty—five ringing verses of enthusiastic loyalty, set to the air of the National Anthem; a beautiful Maltese Cross Medal, bearing the bust of Her Majesty, with suitable inscription; a Pair of Miniature Fancy Opera Glasses, fitted with powerful microscopic lenses, which magnify up the following photographic gems which are mounted on glass: The Queen, 1837-1897, and four of the Royal Residences; also a Gas Balloon for sending up in the air, which bears the portrait of the Queen; a Pocket-handkerchief with the Queen's portrait;

3 Illumination Lanterns, 12in. long; a Charming Brooch, made in the shape of the Royal Crown; a splendid Union Jack Flag, and also a British Ensign Flag for outdoor decorations, each flag about 2ft. long; a beautiful Royal Scarf Pin, representing the head of Her Majesty; One hundred Illuminating Fire Stars; and finally, a Magnificently Coloured Picture, or rather, series of Pictures, measuring 22 inches by 17 inches, showing a House beautifully decorated and illuminated in honour of the Queen, and pictures of Trophies of Flags, Japanese Lanterns, Illuminated Crowns and Stars, etc., etc.—nine different colours—forming a handsome souvenir to hand down to future generations of what was done in celebration of the Record Reign. The entire consignment of goods

CARRIAGE FREE FOR 2s. 6d.

Truly a Record Parcel. Read the description again. All these things you get for the small sum of 2s. 6d. If you order two parcels, we give you free either a handsome Bust of the Queen on a pedestal, or a Viennese Gold Record Ring set with brilliant stones, whichever you prefer. **The Demand for these Parcels will be enormous.** You should therefore send at once, before they are all sold. Illuminations and Decorations undertaken in all parts of the country. Send for Special Diamond Jubilee Catalogue, 1d.

IN ADDITION TO ALL THIS,

In each parcel is our Grand Puzzle Picture of a scene in Her Majesty's Life, prepared at great expense. Every person putting or trying to put together this Puzzle Picture can send it to us in competition for

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We are offering 1,000 **REAL Sovereigns** (the new special Record Sovereigns made this year), 1,000 **REAL** Silver Watches, 1,000 **REAL** Gold Brooches, 1,000 Free Return Tickets, London to Margate, 1,000 **REAL** Gold Rings, 1,000 sets 18-carat Gold Front Studs, 1,000 Lady's Twill Silk Umbrellas, 1,000 Saloon Cartridge Pistols, 1,000 Silver Pencil-cases, 1,000 Silver Rings, 1,000 Musical Boxes, 1,000 Pairs of Scissors, 1,000 Pocket-knives.

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ORGANETTES 4/- MONTHLY

Plays Hymns, Popular Airs, Quadrilles, Waltzes, Hornpipes, &c. A mere child can play it. Cash or easy payments. List of tunes and full particulars free.

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ARE YOU LITTLE?

If so, wear the "A D" Invisible Elevators (Regd.). Will increase your height up to four inches; the only approved means; detection impossible; simple, inexpensive. Send stamped envelope for particulars to the ORIENTAL TOILET CO. (B 5 Dept.), 87, Strand, London

"DRUNKENNESS"

CURED. A Lady having cured her husband secretly of intemperate habits, will gladly send particulars of the remedy on receipt of stamped envelope.—Mrs. S. S. BARRINGTON, 4, Featherstone Bldgs., LONDON, W.C.

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or "Maggots," Pimples, Blotches, etc., immediately and permanently removed by my Skin Cleansing Lotion, "CUTISOLINE." Never fails. Hundreds of testimonials. Post free with directions, 1/6, 3/- and 5/-. AUSTIN LENNOX, Skin Specialist, 1, Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, LONDON.

TOO STOUT

If you require a reliable remedy for the relief of superfluous fat, send for a box of my **"H.D."** Pills. No starvation required; you may eat and drink what you like, yet I guarantee to either sex a permanent reduction of 5lb. to 7lb. weekly. They are a harmless vegetable preparation; successful in the most stubborn cases, and improve health and figure. Their action is rapid, certain, safe, tasteless, and highly recommended. Prices, 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 11s., post free, plain wrapper. PROFESSOR F. T. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

A LOVELY FIGURE

with *full, perfect, natural Bust*, obtained by a simple, inexpensive self-treatment. Success guaranteed. Highly approved and recommended by the Medical Profession. For testimonials, press opinions, and free particulars, send stamped envelope in confidence to Madame "B. J.," Oriental Toilet Co., 87, Strand, London.

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THE ONLY CURE for STOUTNESS Registered by GOVERNMENT Price 2/6

ALL FAT PEOPLE

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An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

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"87, Alexandra Road, Norwich.—Gentlemen,—I have had some boxes of your Tablets for my wife, and she has derived great benefit from them. Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Bretton West, near Wakefield.—"Miss L. LANGFIELD has taken a box of tablets, and is already 7lb. lighter."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.—Mr. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17st., and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.—Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

127, Out Gang Lane, Old Radford, Notts.—Miss E. P. PARSONS says: "I was 16st. before taking Tablets, and am now 15st.—going on nicely."

Send **2/6** to **THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.**

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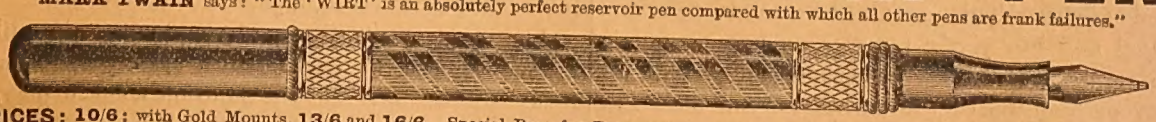
MARK TWAIN says: "The 'WIRT' is an absolutely perfect reservoir pen compared with which all other pens are frank failures."



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THE WIRT FOUNTAIN PEN CO. LTD., 1, GRESHAM BUILDINGS, **LONDON, E.C.**

CAN YOU EXPLAIN IT?

Here is a fact for the reader to think over and explain: Out of the thousands of letters written to us by people on the subject of their illness, the great majority assert that such illness began in the spring of the year—commonly in March or April. Of the remainder, the most cases are said to arise in the autumn; very few in midsummer or in midwinter.

Now, there is a reason for whatsoever happens. What is the reason for that? While you are cogitating on it, I will cite you an illustration or two.

"In the spring of 1892," says one of the many women who, in spite of what men say to the contrary, know how to tell a long story in few words, "I fell into a low, weak state of health. All the energy and ambition seemed to leave me as the snow melted off the ground. I was languid and tired, and felt heavy in body, as if I had somehow increased in weight—whereas the truth was the other way. My appetite was poor, and what little I ate hurt me at the chest, and lay dull and cold on my stomach.

"Presently a hacking cough set in, with night sweats, which made me extremely weak. I was often taken with a pain between the shoulders, and had a sense of sinking, as one has when wholly exhausted from some unusual labour or worry.

"As time went on I became still more feeble, and it was with great difficulty that I met the demands of my business. This will give you a general idea of my condition for nearly two years. None of the various medicines I resorted to gave me more than temporary relief.

"In February, 1894, a friend urged me to try Mother Seigel's Syrup. I got a bottle from Messrs. Robinson & Co., chemists, Hunslet Carr, and it helped me greatly. My appetite awoke, food agreed with me, and I felt better and stronger altogether. Holding on with the Syrup the cough abated, all pain left me, and I was once more in the happy possession of my former good health. This result I owe to Mother Seigel and her justly popular medicine; and if the publication of my experience of it will, in your opinion, be of use to others, you have my consent to use this letter in that way. (Signed) (Miss) Alice Green, 10, Moor Road, Hunslet Carr, Leeds, March 28th, 1895."

"One day in April, 1890," writes another, "I was suddenly seized with a strange feeling in my head, as though I was about to have a fit. My body writhed and my face grew dark and discoloured. The doctor said I was suffering from a form of nervous prostration which would probably produce spasms. He was right. I began to have three or four fits each day. I felt low and queer, and never knew what it was to be hungry. About my stomach and chest strange gnawing pains came and went. I had always a starved sensation all over me. I got no rest day or night, and thought I should never leave my bed alive. The doctor attended me constantly, but his treatment availed nothing. Month after month I remained in this condition.

"When I had given up all hope, I first read about Mother Seigel's Syrup in a small pamphlet which was left at our house. The book said my symptoms were due to inflammatory dyspepsia, which had filled my blood with poisons, and that my nerves were prostrated with lack of food—virtual starvation. Cure the diseased stomach, it said, and the fits, etc., would vanish of themselves. I sent to Messrs. Thompson & Son, Grocers and Tea Merchants, Ampleforth, for this medicine, and began taking it at once. Relief came in three or four days. After that, continuing with the Syrup, I improved every day. I now enjoy my food. After using two bottles the fits left me entirely, and I was strong and well as ever. Since that time (now four and a half years ago) I have had the best of health, and required no medicine whatever. (Signed) (Mrs.) Mary Annie Elsworth, Ampleforth, Oswaldkirk, York, April 10th, 1895."

The accuracy of the latter statement is vouched for by the Messrs. Thompson, who have known Mrs. Elsworth for many years. Although no witness is really needed, as every case of cure by Mother Seigel's Syrup is thoroughly investigated before publication, only unquestionable facts being allowed to appear.

As to why the majority of people are taken ill in the spring, we shall reserve that point for future discussion. Be the solution what it may, one thing is certain: wise folk will keep a bottle of Mother Seigel's Syrup by them every week in the string of fifty-two.